



Performance Audit

*DEPARTMENT OF PERMITS, LICENSES, AND PERMITS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
DEPARTMENT OF MOBILITY & INFRASTRUCTURE*

CITYWIDE CODE VIOLATIONS

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CITY OF PITTSBURGH
OFFICE OF THE CITY CONTROLLER
Controller Rachael Heisler

June 2026

To the Honorable Mayor Corey O'Connor and
Honorable Members of Pittsburgh City Council:

The Office of the City Controller is pleased to present this performance audit of **Citywide Code Violations** conducted pursuant to the powers of the Controller under Section 404(c) of the Pittsburgh Home Rule Charter. This report analyzes City code violations issued by the following three City departments: **Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections (PLI)**; the **Department of Public Works (DPW)**; and the **Department of Mobility & Infrastructure (DOMI)**. City Council, per Resolution 18 of 2024, requested this audit with ten specific items as detailed in this report's Objectives section.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City Code enforcement plays a vital role to ensure that buildings and properties within all City neighborhoods meet established laws, regulations, and standards. These codes exist to protect public safety and promote public health via administration of waste disposal, improvement of aesthetics, enforcement of building maintenance, maintenance of property values by ensuring properties are well-kept and comply with zoning laws, and quality of life by preventing nuisances and safety concerns.

The City employs inspectors to investigate and cite violations; issue criminal complaints, when necessary; and appear in court to testify as expert witnesses to violations that have escalated to a court. Inspectors are required to input and document the results of each investigation into the City's code enforcement software Computronix, which is routed complaints and reports of violations from the City's 311 Response Center, the resource center for non-emergency concerns or questions. Citizen reports can be made either by phone or the 311 online request forms. The type of complaint will determine the City department responsible for code enforcement, and Computronix automates the departmental assignment based on the type of complaint. In addition, cases can originate from 'pick-ups,' referring to violations found by inspectors during their assigned investigations where inspectors create the case in Computronix.

During the audit scope, inspectors for PLI enforced International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) adopted by the City ordinances of Chapter 1004, Title 7: Business Licensing and Title 9:

Zoning Code. DPW enforced City ordinances of Title 6: Chapter 601.11 Littering and Dumping, Chapter 609: Weed and Grass, and Chapter 619: Municipal Waste and Recycling. DOMI enforced all City codes under City ordinance Title 4: Public Places and Property.

When an inspector identifies a violation, the inspector issues a letter of compliance to the property owner. If the violation is not abated during a prescribed amount of time, the property owner will receive a criminal complaint with the Magisterial District Court date. Criminal complaints are generally issued on the third investigation, although repeat offenders could be subject to criminal complaints immediately. Inspectors then conduct a pre-court investigation of the property to check for abatement. If abated, the case is withdrawn and court hearing cancelled. If unabated, the case continues to court where the inspector testifies and documents the verdict.

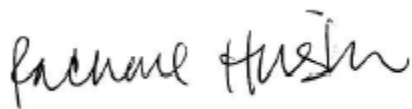
Auditors obtained three datasets to support the analysis of this audit: (1) 311 complaints, (2) code violations, and (3) court results specific to weeds code violations. Of the three City departments that handle Citywide code violations, PLI has policies and procedures implemented, DPW has policies and procedures drafted, and DOMI does not have written policies and procedures. None of the departments have policies specific to input procedures for closing out case files or timeframes for compliance and reinspection (see **Finding #1: Policies and Procedures** and **Recommendation #1**).

Auditors received samples of case file information from each department, including 52 PLI cases, 15 DPW cases, and 15 DOMI cases, and conducted testing on inputs, timeliness, and documentation of these cases. Auditors found a significant portion of the sample documentation was either insufficient for understanding the conditions of the violations or missing specific items (see **Finding #2: Testing of Case File Documentation** and **Recommendation #2**). Auditors also found that timeliness was inconsistent for all departments, which could be due to the high caseloads, paired with limited staff. However, inspector hours are also not tracked, which limits any time-management analysis of this condition (see **Finding #3: Testing of Timeliness** and **Recommendation #3**).

A cohesive process for code violations connected to City-owned properties is not in place. As a result, auditors identified a significant number of investigations on City-owned properties. Two hundred forty-three investigations were administered on 56 violations of City-owned properties that went to court, and 4,087 investigations were administered on 1,742 violations of City-owned properties that did not go to court. In total, 4,330 investigations were administered on City-owned properties during the scope of the audit. Being that City-owned properties are not subject to fines at the court level, resources could be unnecessarily spent on inspections, mailings, or even time in court accordingly (see **Finding #4: Violations on City-owned Properties** and **Recommendation #4**).

Our Findings and Recommendations begin on Page 39. We would like to thank PLI, DPW, and DOMI staff for their cooperation and assistance during our audit procedures.

Sincerely,



Rachael Heisler
City Controller

INTRODUCTION

This performance audit of the City of Pittsburgh's **Citywide Code Violations** was conducted pursuant to the City Controller's powers under Article 4, Section 404(c) of Pittsburgh's Home Rule Charter. This performance audit analyzes City code violations that were issued a criminal complaint in Magisterial District Court by the following three City departments: **Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections (PLI); the Department of Public Works (DPW);** and the **Department of Mobility & Infrastructure (DOMI).**

The audit was requested by City Council, per Resolution 18 of 2024. This is the first performance audit of all City code violations as issued by the three City departments responsible for code enforcement that escalated to the Magisterial District Court.

OBJECTIVES

The following items are listed in Resolution 18 of 2024:

- 1) To report the number of 311 citizen requests to the City of Pittsburgh for code violations specific to PLI, DPW, and DOMI.
- 2) To analyze the length of time from first notice of violation to the criminal complaint issuance date; then the length of time from the criminal complaint issuance date to first scheduled court date.
- 3) To determine the number of court cases which are withdrawn by the inspector.
- 4) To report the City staff hours required to bring violations before local magistrates.
- 5) To determine the number and type of Magisterial District Court outcomes by each City magistrate.
- 6) To assess the dollar amount of fines and number of hours of community restitution issued for each City magistrate.
- 7) To assess the ratio of owner-occupant defendants to rental property owners, Limited Liability Corporations (LLCs), Limited Partnerships (LPs), and the corresponding rates of compliance.
- 8) To determine the age of defendants.
- 9) To report the number of clean and liens routed to and performed by DPW.
- 10) To assess the locations and/or defendants with most egregious and recurring violations.

The following was not directly requested by Resolution 18 of 2024 but incorporated into auditor objectives in support of the items requested by resolution:

- 11) To assess the accuracy of system inputs, timeliness of inspections and work completed, and completeness of case file documentation for each department.

SCOPE

The scope of this performance audit is January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2023.

METHODOLOGY

In order to complete all items requested by Council's ordinance, auditors first obtained data of 311 complaints; code violations logged in the City's Computronix software system (a.k.a., OneStopPGH) during the scope of the audit from PLI; and court data for overgrown weeds verdicts and fine amounts by Magisterial District Court.

Auditors then implemented the following procedures to complete the requested items of Council's resolution:

- 1) Auditors prepped and analyzed 311 complaint data to determine the total number of complaints by year; complaint type logged by 311 staff; and the City department responsible for each code violation complaint investigation.
- 2) Auditors prepped and analyzed inspector code violation case file general information, workflow, and court data logged in the Computronix system. This information was used to conduct a time analysis for cases that escalated to magisterial court.
- 3) Auditors filtered Computronix workflow data by outcome to determine the number of case numbers withdrawn and the number of steps taken by inspectors prior to withdrawal of the case.
- 4) For all three departments, auditors requested the amount of time each inspector worked to close all case files that escalated to court.
- 5) Auditors used Computronix court data to calculate the total number of court case outcomes by each Magisterial District Judge.
- 6) Auditors coordinated with a Magisterial District Judge and court administrator to obtain violation information and fine amounts for weeds violations.
- 7) Auditors utilized datasets provided by PLI and also public information of property owners to express a ratio of owner types.

- 8) Auditors inquired about data availability for defendant ages.
- 9) Auditors filtered and expressed datasets by clean and lien, as routed to DPW.
- 10) Auditors organized previously prepped datasets to express violations by location and recurring incidents.

Additional methodologies in support of the items listed in Resolution 18 of 2024 included the following procedures:

- 11) Auditors requested documentation on PLI, DPW, and DOMI case files. Case file documentation was then used to administer testing procedures on three aspects of inspector operations: (1) accuracy of inputs into the system, (2) timeliness of inspections, and (3) completeness of documentation.

OVERVIEW

City Code enforcement plays a vital role to ensure that buildings and properties within all City neighborhoods meet established laws, regulations, and standards. These codes exist to protect public safety and promote public health via administration of waste disposal, improvement of aesthetics, enforcement of building maintenance, maintenance of property values by ensuring properties are well-kept and comply with zoning laws, and quality of life by preventing nuisances and safety concerns.

To manage standards, regulations, and codes, the City employs various inspectors to respond to violations; issue criminal complaints, when necessary; and appear in court to testify as expert witnesses to violations that have escalated to court. Inspectors are also tasked with documenting the results of their inspection activities. During the audit scope, inspectors for PLI enforced International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) adopted by the City ordinances of Chapter 1004, Title 7: Business Licensing and Title 9: Zoning Code. DPW enforced City ordinances of Title 6: Chapter 601.11 Littering and Dumping, Chapter 609: Weed and Grass, and Chapter 619: Municipal Waste and Recycling. DOMI enforced all City codes under City ordinance Title 4: Public Places and Property.

COMPUTRONIX

The software system now used by all City departments issuing code enforcement citations is called Computronix, which acts as a centralized platform for permitting, licensing, zoning approvals, registrations, citations, and so forth. The system is designed, also, to house documentation associated with inspection activities, including a schedule of required inspections, dates and results of actual inspections, photos of the violations, additional case notes to aid in understanding individual violation processes, and documentation of inspections performed.

Of note, PLI and DOMI have logged case numbers for all years of the audit scope, while DPW case numbers did not appear in the data until May 2023, coinciding with DPW's integration into the Computronix system. Prior to Computronix, DPW reported that scant inspection records were kept.

CODE VIOLATION PROCESS

The majority of code violations are reported via the City's 311 Response Center, the resource center for non-emergency concerns or questions. Citizen reports can be made either by phone or the 311 online request form. Details for both options can be located on the [311 Response Center](#) webpage.

Incoming service requests and complaints are assigned complaint types. The online form allows the user the option to choose the complaint type, while the 311 staff will categorize complaint types for phone requests. When complaints are logged in the 311 system, the file is automatically transferred into Computronix, which is the system used by PLI, DPW, and DOMI for code enforcement case tracking. The type of complaint will determine the City department responsible for code enforcement, and Computronix automates the departmental assignment based on the type of complaint. These data systems communicate complaint logs Monday – Friday of each week.

Cases can also originate from 'pick-ups,' referring to violations found by inspectors during their assigned investigations. In these cases, inspectors create the case in the Computronix system on their laptops.

After the complaint is received or discovered, the timeframe for inspector investigations can vary depending on the type of violation and the department assigned the case. If the inspector finds a violation exists, a letter of compliance is issued to the property owner. If the violation is not abated during a prescribed amount of time, the property owner will receive a criminal complaint, along with the Magisterial District Court date. Criminal complaints are generally issued on the third investigation, although repeat offenders could be subject to criminal complaints immediately, depending on the type of violation. Inspectors then conduct a pre-court investigation of the property to check for abatement. If abated, the case is withdrawn and there is no court hearing. However, if unabated, the case continues to court where the inspector testifies and then documents the Magisterial District Judge's verdict.

PLI

PLI consists of three separate divisions: Construction, Operations, and Licensing & Administration. This audit focuses exclusively on the processes and procedures of the Operations Division. The Operations Division has a number of responsibilities that include the following: ensures that existing property buildings and associated systems are maintained; responds to citizen complaints; performs code enforcement investigations and issues citations accordingly; condemns unsafe and structurally unsound buildings; and remediates neighborhood blight via City-funded demolitions.

In the 2023 operating budget, PLI was budgeted for 23 code inspectors. The types of violations PLI enforces are as follows: Weeds and/or Debris on a property, Abandoned Vehicles (on private property only), Sidewalks (that are a tripping hazard), Electrical Violations, Building Violations, and Zoning Violations.

PLI CITATION PROCESS

PLI has internal policies and procedures that outline inspector duties regarding the code violation processes. Inspectors first review all incoming 311 complaints each day and create new case files or, when applicable, link complaints to existing case files. Inspectors are required to complete all onsite investigations within three business days of the 311-complaint date. During an investigation, inspectors are required to take clear photos depicting the violation, document important information notes relevant to the case, and record the investigation outcome in the Computronix software system.

When a violation is cited, a compliance letter is mailed to the property owner notifying them of the violation and the corrective action needed for abatement. Depending on the violation, PLI's compliance period is between one and 30 days from the previous investigation. For example, Weeds Violations (IMPC 302.4) have a compliance period of seven days, and Occupancy Permit Requirements (§922.20) have a compliance period of 30 days. If violations escalate to criminal complaints, inspectors are required to conduct pre-court investigations within three business days of all court hearing dates.

Sometimes compliance letters and criminal complaints to the defendant are unsuccessful because the property owners cannot be located. This can occur because of incorrect owner addresses (e.g., the property owner lives elsewhere); the owner has abandoned the property; the owners have become deceased; etc. In this situation, at the hearing date, the Magisterial District Judge will dismiss the case for no service. Cases that are dismissed by the Courts for no service are then considered 'Dead End' and are eligible to be placed on PLI's Dead End Programmatic Inspection list. The goal of the 'Dead End' list is to reduce the number of cases that escalate to court that cannot result in abatement.

When Computronix prompts that the property is on the 'Dead End' list, the inspector should research if the property had any active cases opened within the past 60 days. If no active cases are open, the inspector would then issue a clean and lien on the property. When inspectors select a clean and lien investigation outcome, the job automatically routes to Cartegraph, the internal asset management system used by DPW. This prompts DPW to administer a clean and lien, and when DPW completes the work in Cartegraph, the completed date is automatically transferred back to Computronix, which then closes the case.

DPW

DPW is comprised of four bureaus: administration, operations, environmental service (ES), and facilities. ES is responsible for investigating code violations. In 2021 and 2022, ES Bureau foremen had the authority to enforce all City residential and business refuse and recycling violations. These violations include Failure to Recycle, Overflowing Dumpsters, Trash Set-out Timing Violations, Improper Storage of Waste and Placement of Hazardous Materials for Pick-up, etc. ES foremen also issued citations for litter and dumping violations and weeds (C §609.01).

In 2023, DPW's integration into Computronix led to the Bureau of Administration adding two anti-litter inspectors to oversee DPW's dumping and littering enforcement. In addition, the Bureau of Operations performs all clean and liens.

DPW CITATION PROCESS

Inspector operating policies and procedures are currently in rough draft format. DPW indicated that ES should perform investigations within three business days of the initial 311 complaint. Complaints are handled on a first-come, first-serve basis. During all investigations, inspectors should take violation photos, document notes relevant to the case and record the investigation outcome. If violations are found on the site, DPW allows 14 days for compliance from the previous investigation for all City code violations. For all cases that escalate to court, DPW inspectors are also to perform pre-court investigations within three business days of all hearing dates.

CLEAN AND LIENS

When a property owner is notified of an overgrowth- or debris-related violation on the owner's property and the property is not brought into compliance, the City has the right to enter the property to remediate the situation and place a lien on the property. This is called a clean and lien and is performed by DPW's Bureau of Operations.

During a clean and lien, a DPW crew visits the property; boards up doors and/or windows; and/or removes overgrown weeds, debris, and trash. The City will calculate the cost of the cleanup, file a claim in the Court of Common Pleas for the amount, and place a lien on the property. The lien is in addition to any fine or penalty imposed by code violations.

DPW performs clean and liens one day per week. A list of open clean and liens are selected based on close proximity to each other to limit travel time. Then, four staff members from each of the five street maintenance divisions are dispatched to an area to complete the work. Per DPW, there is no policy that establishes a timeframe for the completion of clean and lien services.

DOMI

DOMI is comprised of four bureaus: Administrative, Planning, Policy & Permitting, Project Design & Delivery, and Traffic Operations. DOMI has maintained 11 positions tasked with code inspection duties throughout the scope years of this audit. In 2021 and 2022, the following positions were in effect: one Utility & Right of Way Supervisor, one Inspector 3, four Inspector 2, three Inspector Telecommunications, and two positions for Inspector 1. In 2023, both Inspector 2 and Inspector Telecommunications positions were reclassified to seven ROW Construction Inspectors. Of all positions listed, only two (i.e., Inspector 1 positions) were dedicated to code enforcement.

DOMI inspectors respond to code violations centered around the public Right of Way: Sidewalk or Road Obstructions or Closure, Lack of Snow/Ice Removal on Sidewalks, Dumpsters on Streets or Sidewalks and Utility Cuts and Poles.

DOMI CITATION PROCESS

Key documents surrounding DOMI's citation process for the public are the City of Pittsburgh's Right-of-Way Procedures manual and the Pittsburgh City Code, Title Four: Public Places and Property. However, DOMI has no internal written policy and procedures to outline inspector duties, timeframes for inspections, or requirements for inputting and documenting case file information. Expectations are communicated by department supervisors to inspectors verbally.

DOMI prioritizes 311 complaint response times based on the severity of the violation, with sewer laterals, street closures, and failed utility cuts being the most urgent. All inspection timeframes for DOMI violations are hardcoded into Computronix. Initial inspections are hardcoded for seven days, and compliance timeframes are coded for 14 days. The compliance timeframe was selected by DOMI as a general expectation for abatement of the violation.

PROPERTIES OWNED BY THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH

The City also owns properties and can receive citations in the same manner outlined above, as applicable. The type of City property determines who is responsible for receiving and abating the violation, if applicable. There are three categories of City properties: 'Permanent,' 'Hold for Study,' and 'For Sale.'

- Permanent City properties are owned indefinitely by the City. Examples include City operational buildings, like the City-County Building; parks; police stations; etc. Code violations of these properties are issued to Finance and abatement referred to DPW.
- Properties under 'Hold for Study' are typically vacant properties that are not active on the market. These properties could include greenways or developmental project sites. Although these properties may receive violations issued to Finance, the City does not

abate these violations, and these properties are generally not maintained. In emergency cases, Finance will refer abatement to DPW.

- ‘For Sale’ properties are properties acquired by the Three Taxing Bodies, which includes the City of Pittsburgh, School District of Pittsburgh, and County of Allegheny, and held for public sale. Finance contracts individual vendors to maintain these properties and respond to 311 complaints.

ANALYSIS

DATASETS

Auditors obtained three different datasets to support the analysis of this audit: (1) 311 complaints, (2) code violations, and (3) court results specific to weeds code violations.

- 1) **311 Complaints:** PLI provided auditors with a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet containing 311 complaints logged between January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2023. This spreadsheet contained complaint numbers logged by ID, status, dates of creation and completion, complaint types, descriptions, parcels, addresses, and case file numbers. Case file numbers were the identifiers connecting the original complaint to inspections of the property and, as applicable, cited violations. These case numbers also identified the department responsible for the inspection (i.e., ‘PLI,’ ‘DPW,’ ‘DOMI’). The 311 spreadsheet contained a total of 67,631 complaints and associated case numbers. It also contained 206 complaints filed by case numbers carried over from an old ticketing system, which were not incorporated into our audit analysis.
- 2) **Code Violations Data:** PLI provided the auditors with the City’s Computronix code violation dataset in Excel format. Case number entries were arranged in three individual tabs: General Info, Court Data, and Workflow (inspections).

The General Info tab contained all case numbers entered into the system during the scope years with columns detailing the violation dates, completed dates, statuses, parcel numbers, addresses, code sections and titles, and code descriptions. Numerous cases in the General Info tab were still pending closure with different assigned statuses. For example, a case file with a status of ‘in-court’ meant the department issued paperwork to the courts and are awaiting a scheduled court date. Auditors identified 45,413 unique case numbers on this spreadsheet.

The Court Data tab contained case numbers from the General Info tab that received criminal complaints and were scheduled court dates. This tab displayed columns detailing case files: docket numbers, which are unique tracking numbers used by the courts; court dates and times; and outcomes. Each case number on this tab had at least one but often multiple associated rows to show case progress (e.g., continuances, dismissals, verdicts,

etc.). Auditors identified 12,483 unique case numbers on this sheet; however, three of these case numbers did not appear on the General Info tab of the data, and, therefore, auditors used 12,480 as the total from the Court Data tab.

Similar to the Court Data tab, the Workflow (inspections) tab contained case numbers arranged in rows by workflow step. Each row of a unique case number would show the progress of that case (e.g., the number of investigations performed, or action taken). Auditors identified 45,274 unique case files on this tab and noted that 139 case numbers on the General Info tab were not included on the Workflow (inspections) tab. Auditors then identified 147,580 total rows on Workflow (inspections), which comprises the total of all investigations (i.e., steps) taken for the 45,274 unique case files.

Due to datasets containing relevant but separate data on multiple tabs, auditors had to link data from all three spreadsheets in order to complete numerous audit objectives. PLI also provided the auditors a database dictionary for each spreadsheet.

- 3) **Court Results Data:** In order for the auditors to report on the case outcomes, fine amounts, and hours of restitution decided by Magisterial District Court, the auditors reached out to a Magisterial District Court administrator to obtain relevant information. Auditors were informed that restitution hours are not issued, only fines, and that a full-scale data pull of all violations by district would be difficult to perform due to multiple barriers, including staff time constraints, privacy, etc. Therefore, auditors requested a sample of court information. The sample focused on the most prolific code violation categories: §609.01 and §302.4, which entail Overgrowth on Property, Weeds, and Grass.

RESOLUTION ITEM #1: 311 CITIZEN REPORT DATABASE

Table 1 displays the volume of complaints received by 311 and forwarded to other departments for possible code enforcement during the scope years. As Table 1 shows 51,875, or 76.7%, of all complaints were directed to PLI, and DOMI received 11,548, or 17.1%, of all complaints. Since DPW started using Computronix in mid-2023, only 4,208, or 6.2%, were logged for DPW within the audit scope.

Table 1					
311 Totals by Department					
For the Period January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023					
Department	2021	2022	2023	Total	Percentage
PLI	16,118	17,792	17,965	51,875	76.7%
DPW	Not Available	Not Available	4,208	4,208	6.2%
DOMI	3,853	4,451	3,244	11,548	17.1%
Total	19,971	22,243	25,417	67,631	100.0%

Source: 311 data provided by PLI

Specific to PLI, complaints of 55 separate categories were logged in the 311 data. Table 2 breaks down PLI’s top 10 most prolific categories. The top five complaint categories were the following: Weeds/Debris (28,819), or 55.6%; Building Maintenance (6,376), or 12.3%; Broken

Sidewalk (2,722), or 5.2%; Building Without a Permit (2,675), or 5.2%; and Tree Issues (1,772), or 3.4%. Please note that all categories totaled as ‘Other’ individually represented 1% or less of the total number of complaints.

Table 2					
311 Complaints Routed to PLI					
For the Period January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023					
Type	2021	2022	2023	Total	Percentage
Weeds/Debris	8,694	10,390	9,735	28,819	55.6%
Building Maintenance	2,100	2,174	2,102	6,376	12.3%
Broken Sidewalk	777	847	1,098	2,722	5.2%
Building w/o Permit	787	873	1,015	2,675	5.2%
Tree Issues	545	646	581	1,772	3.4%
Zoning Issue	411	366	425	1,202	2.3%
Junk Vehicles (Private)	413	319	335	1,067	2.1%
Vacant Building	378	299	334	1,011	1.9%
Dumping (Private)	451	288	259	998	1.9%
Construction Site Maintenance	253	213	165	631	1.2%
Other	1,309	1,377	1,916	4,602	8.9%
Total	16,118	17,792	17,965	51,875	100%

Source: 311 data provided by PLI

As noted, DPW’s integration into Computronix did not occur until mid-2023, and, therefore, DPW’s total complaints is significantly less. Of the data available for DPW, 15 total complaint categories were logged.

Table 3 breaks down the 10 most common complaints issued to DPW. The top five complaint categories were the following: Refuse Violations (2,190), or 52%; Early Set Out (859), or 20.4%; Weeds/Debris (354), or 8.4%; Illegal Dumping (315), or 7.5%; and Commercial Refuse/Dumping (202), or 4.8%. Please note that all categories totaled as ‘Other’ individually represented less than 1% of the total number of complaints.

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Type	2021	2022	2023	Total	Percentage
Refuse Violations	Not Available	Not Available	2,190	2,190	52.0%
Early Set Out	Not Available	Not Available	859	859	20.4%
Weeds/Debris	Not Available	Not Available	354	354	8.4%
Illegal Dumping	Not Available	Not Available	315	315	7.5%
Commercial Refuse	Not Available	Not Available	202	202	4.8%
Late Set Out	Not Available	Not Available	153	153	3.6%
Recycling Violation	Not Available	Not Available	103	103	2.4%
Dumpster	Not Available	Not Available	17	17	0.4%
Dumping (Private)	Not Available	Not Available	6	6	0.1%
Building Maintenance	Not Available	Not Available	3	3	0.1%
Other	Not Available	Not Available	6	6	0.1%
Total			4,208	4,208	100.0%

Source: 311 data provided by PLI

Complaints of 47 separate categories were logged in the 311 data for DOMI. Table 4 breaks down the top 10 most prolific categories. The top five complaint categories were the following: Utility Cut - Other (1,930), or 16.7%; Sidewalk Has Ice or Litter (1,233), or 10.7%; Blocked or Closed Sidewalks (1,187), or 10.3%; Wires (1,146), or 9.9%; and Street Obstructed or Closed (844), or 7.3%. Please note that all categories totaled as 'Other' individually represent 3% or less of the total number of complaints.

Type	2021	2022	2023	Total	Percentage
Utility Cut - Other	640	804	486	1,930	16.7%
Sidewalk Ice or Litter	516	588	129	1,233	10.7%
Blocked or Closed Sidewalks	473	397	317	1,187	10.3%
Wires	399	445	302	1,146	9.9%
Street Obstruction/Closure	223	347	274	844	7.3%
Road	222	283	254	759	6.6%
Dumpster (On Street)	236	252	242	730	6.3%
Sidewalk/Curb/ADA	231	268	189	688	6.0%
Utility Pole	207	228	144	579	5.0%
Sidewalk, Snow/Ice	163	263	49	475	4.1%
Other	543	576	858	1,977	17.1%
Total	3,853	4,451	3,244	11,548	100.0%

Source: 311 data provided by PLI

RESOLUTION ITEM #2: TIME ANALYSIS

Using PLI's Code Violations Data, auditors linked case numbers and violation dates from the General Info tab to the dates of criminal complaint issuances on the Workflow (inspections) tab and the first scheduled court dates on the Court Data tab. Auditors then calculated the amount of

time between each step and expressed the data in ranges of days from zero up to 120 days or more. The results were then divided by department.

Please note that a small percentage of the data could not be computed due to input or data errors. For example, in cases where the criminal complaint issuance date is before the violation date or court date is before the criminal complaint date. These are expressed in the Tables 5 through 7 as ‘unknown’.

Regarding these tables, please note the following:

- Table 5 provides time analysis for PLI.
- Table 6 provides time analysis for DPW.
- Table 7 provides time analysis for DOMI.

The time analysis results for PLI’s code violations are summarized in Table 5 below.

Table 5 PLI Time Analysis of Code Violations For the Period January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023				
Violation to Criminal Compliant Issuance			Criminal Complaint to First Court Date	
# of Days	# of Cases	% of Total	# of Cases	% of Total
0 – 30	4,753	40.2%	66	0.6%
31 – 60	3,114	26.4%	4,166	35.3%
61 – 90	3,310	28.0%	4,766	40.4%
91 – 120	245	2.1%	1,784	15.1%
More than 120	379	3.2%	1,023	8.7%
Unknown	10	0.1%	6	0.1%
Total	11,811	100.0%	11,811	100.0%
<i>Source: Code Violations Data provided by PLI</i>				

The time analysis results for DPW’s code violations are summarized in Table 6.

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Table 6 DPW Time Analysis of Code Violations For the Period January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023				
Violation to Criminal Compliant Issuance			Criminal Complaint to First Court Date	
# of Days	# of Cases	% of Total	# of Cases	% of Total
0 – 30	397	95.9%	1	0.2%
31 – 60	14	3.4%	194	46.9%
61 – 90	1	0.2%	124	30.0%
91 – 120	0	0.0%	53	12.8%
More than 120	1	0.2%	42	10.1%
Unknown	1	0.2%	0	0.0%
Total	414	100.0%	414	100.0%
<i>Source: Code Violations Data provided by PLI</i>				

The time analysis results for DOMI’s code violations are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7 DOMI Time Analysis of Code Violations For the Period January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023				
Violation to Criminal Compliant Issuance			Criminal Complaint to First Court Date	
# of Days	# of Cases	% of Total	# of Cases	% of Total
0 – 30	132	51.8%	6	2.4%
31 – 60	83	32.5%	135	52.9%
61 – 90	20	7.8%	57	22.4%
91 – 120	9	3.5%	27	10.6%
More than 120	10	3.9%	29	11.4%
Unknown	1	0.4%	1	0.4%
Total	255	100.0%	255	100.0%
<i>Source: Code Violations Data provided by PLI</i>				

RESOLUTION ITEM #3: CASES WITHDRAWN

According to the database dictionary provided by PLI to the auditors, an outcome of ‘Withdrawn’ can be selected by an inspector if the cited violation is abated before the scheduled court date. Therefore, using the Workflow (inspections) tab of PLI’s Code Violations Data, auditors identified the total number outcomes with ‘Withdrawn’ as the status. Of note, individual case numbers often contain multiple outcomes, which account for each inspection performed, criminal complaints issued, court dates scheduled, and so forth. Auditors prepped the data to also

express how many steps were administered before withdrawal. This information is shown in Table 8.

Table 8	
Cases Withdrawn by Inspector	
For the Period January 1, 2021, to	
December 31, 2023	
# of Withdrawn	# of Outcomes from Workflow (inspections)
85	3 or less
6,097	4
1,326	5
553	6
579	Between 7 - 17
2	18
1	19
2	21
8,645	
<i>Source: Code Violations Data provided by PLI</i>	

As shown in Table 8, auditors identified 8,645 cases listed as an outcome of ‘Withdrawn’. All of these case numbers included multiple outcomes, which indicates that several steps (e.g., inspections) were often taken by inspectors before the case was withdrawn. For two particularly lengthy cases, 21 separate investigations were performed, followed by court continuances, until the issue was abated and the case withdrawn. For both of these cases, the withdrawals occurred around three years after the initial investigation. By and large, however, most case numbers (i.e., 6,097 or 71%) required only four individual investigations before being withdrawn. Also note that only 85 or about 1% had three or less inspections.

RESOLUTION ITEM #4: STAFF HOURS

Computing staff hours required to bring criminal complaints before local magistrates for each of the three departments involved in the code enforcement process could not be reported for the following reasons:

- PLI does not track or log the number of hours spent on inspections of code violations.
- The time spent by DPW inspectors investigating violations, including fieldwork, court time, and other related administrative tasks, is not tracked.
- DOMI initially indicated to auditors that inspector time logs are maintained in ‘Daily Log’ spreadsheets and mileage was tracked via Global Positioning System (GPS). The auditors received three of their inspector’s ‘daily logs’ covering the audit scope. One inspector log documented total daily shift hours worked, another inspector log

documented daily shift hours worked in the office before field work, and the third log did not have inspector hours documented. All ‘Daily Logs’ presented each inspector’s task completed during their shift but did not show hours worked for the task. For example, hours worked conducting investigations, attending a court hearing, drafting compliance letters etc. Also, DOMI informed auditors that GPS reports could not be retrieved for the audit scope because historical data was lost when they transferred their GPS contract to a new company.

RESOLUTION ITEM #5: COURT CASES BY OUTCOME AND DISTRICT

The auditors used the court data tab from Computronix to count the number and type of Magisterial District Court outcomes by each City magistrate.

There were eight different outcomes indicated on the Court Data tab:

- Dismissed/Other
- Dismissed for No Service
- Guilty
- Not Guilty
- NULL
- Rescheduled
- Withdrawn
- Continued

A few outcomes require further explanation. PLI reports that a NULL court decision is either when the inspector forgot to enter the court decision into Computronix or the case has a future scheduled court date. Also, DPW noted if the case was withdrawn during the pre-court investigation, the scheduled court date will have an outcome of NULL on the court data tab. In this scenario, the court hearing never actually took place. The auditors witnessed this outcome while performing numerous Computronix case file reviews.

A withdrawn case is when the inspector made the decision to withdraw at the hearing date, not the pre-court investigation (see Resolution Item #3). A third outcome example, ‘dismissed for no service,’ is when the District Magistrate will drop the case because notices delivered to the defendant were unsuccessful.

Docket numbers from the Court Data tab were used to identify the individual Magisterial District Court outcomes. Please note that although there were 12,480 unique case numbers with court data (as referenced on page 15), many of the cases required multiple court dates. In total, 23,346 scheduled court dates were assigned during the scope of the audit, each with individual outcomes.

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Table 9 Magisterial District Court Cases by Magistrate and Outcome For the Period January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023								
Magisterial District	Continued	Dismissed/ Other	Dismissed for No Service	Guilty	Not Guilty	Null	Rescheduled	Withdrawn
05-2-27	913	207	93	174	1	621	0	111
05-2-28	473	40	1	13	0	180	0	67
05-2-31	798	90	53	173	4	234	0	262
05-2-35	1,124	39	13	25	5	394	0	273
05-2-36	1,279	65	95	167	3	196	0	350
05-2-38	295	84	145	169	28	506	0	42
05-2-40	1,294	142	134	273	3	477	0	114
05-2-42	1,039	42	217	165	8	499	0	116
05-3-10	633	84	20	66	3	165	0	100
05-3-12	1,031	56	202	283	5	322	1	160
05-3-13	514	134	186	310	9	530	1	102
05-3-14	1,150	337	389	353	6	305	1	261
05-0-03*	467	56	1	83	9	57	0	29
Errors**	96	16	23	42	6	35	0	32
Appeals***	159	24	1	57	6	65	2	33
	11,265	1,416	1,573	2,353	96	4,586	5	2,052
*Pittsburgh Municipal Court								
**Docket number entered incorrectly.								
***Summary Appeal (SA) records do not display a Magisterial District Court number.								
<i>Source: Code Violations Data provided by PLI</i>							<i>Total: 23,346</i>	

RESOLUTION ITEM #6: FINES

A Magisterial District Court administrator provided auditors with two datasets reporting years of the scope, court and docket numbers, and violation code. Auditors were informed that the aggregation of this data is cumbersome and, therefore, requested the data only for violations connected to §609.01 and §302.4.

Fine amounts were included in one dataset but not both, and, therefore, auditors merged the datasets and performed manual research using the Unified Judicial System of PA web portal to fill in any missing fine amounts. Two of the case file fine amounts could not be found on the web portal and were left out of the analysis. The results of these procedures are summarized in Table 10.

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Table 10 Table 10: Dollar Amount of Fines Under 609.01 and 302.4 For the Period January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023					
Magisterial District	Ward	Total Owed in Fines	Total # of Violations	302.4	609.01
05-2-27	Wards 4, 16, 17	\$5,000.00	1	0	1
05-2-31	Wards 8, 10, & 11	\$200.00	2	2	0
05-2-36	Wards 15 & 31	\$2,100.00	3	3	0
05-2-38	Ward 19	\$36,500.00	46	46	0
05-2-40	Wards 21, 22, 23, 35, 25	\$350.00	4	4	0
05-3-13	Wards 20 & 28	\$3,350.00	10	3	7
05-3-14	Wards 18, 29, 30, 32	\$9,450.00	23	23	0
		\$56,950.00	89	81	8
<i>Source: Summary of Court Statistics provided by Magisterial District Court</i>					

RESOLUTION ITEM #7: RATIO OF OWNER TYPES

Auditors first linked the 12,480 unique cases on the Court Data tab to owner information via parcel numbers in the Allegheny County Real Estate database. Auditors then categorized the owner type and how many changes of ownership the parcel experienced within the scope and just outside of scope. The auditors next pulled a randomized sample of 12,480 from the cases which did not progress to court and performed the same steps as with the court cases.

Item #7 of Resolution 18 of 2024 requests a ratio of owner-occupants to rental owners, LLCs, and LPs. Auditors were unable to identify a source to accurately distinguish between owner-occupants and rentals; however, auditors were able to classify property ownership into the following categories: owner-occupied, individuals, LLCs, LPs, ownership by City of Pittsburgh, and other.

To determine owner-occupied properties, auditors utilized Homestead Exemption flags on parcels to reasonably assert that these properties were occupied by the parcel owner. The Homestead and Farmstead Exemption Act (Act 50) allow for reduced property tax assessments on qualifying owner-occupied properties. Eligible owners are required to submit applications and receive approvals from the Allegheny County Office of Property Assessments. Owners must indicate on the application whether or not the property is used as their primary residence.

Although the Act 50 exclusion provided auditors with a methodology for identifying owner occupancy, some personal names listed as owners were not indicated under the Homestead Exemption, and, for this reason, persons identified as owners were separated into two categories: ‘owner-occupied’ and ‘individual.’ This is because auditors do not have enough information to determine if ‘individual’ owners occupy or rent out the residences they own, while the owner-occupied category speaks to owners who very likely reside within the residence.

In reviewing the data, auditors encountered various other categories, including institutions, cemeteries, properties extinguished via destruction or other means, etc. To ensure alignment with the analysis requested by City Council’s resolution, auditors prioritized documentation of owner-occupied, individuals, LLCs, and LPs. However, auditors also documented parcels with court information owned by the City of Pittsburgh. For the purposes of this analysis, auditors categorized everything else (e.g., authorities, unlisted owners, extinguished properties, religious, etc.) as ‘Other.’

Using the categories described above, auditors tallied violations to the applicable owner category based on who owned the property on the date the violation was issued. In the table below, both columns that speak to ownership changes are based on changes that took place during the scope of the audit.

Table 11 Owner Type with Number of Cases and Ownership Changes Who were Sent to Court For the Period January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023						
Owner Type	# Cases Sent to Court	%	One Ownership Change	%	Two or More Ownership Changes	%
Owner Occupied	2,196	17.6%	143	6.5%	22	1.0%
Individual	5,637	45.2%	765	13.6%	125	2.2%
LLC	2,753	22.1%	595	21.6%	145	5.3%
LP	393	3.1%	49	12.5%	1	0.3%
City of Pittsburgh	56	0.4%	24	42.9%	0	0%
Other	1,445	11.6%	**	**	**	**
Total	12,480	100%	1,576	12.6%	293	2.3%
<i>**Too many subclasses of owner types comprise this category to be meaningful.</i>						
<i>Source: Code Violations data provided by PLI and Allegheny County Real Estate portal</i>						

As seen in the table above, individuals (45.2%) made up the largest proportion of owners sent to court during the audit period, followed by LLCs (22.1%), then owner occupied (17.6%), and then LPs (3.1%). Auditors also identified City-owned properties to represent about 0.4% of violations that escalated to court. The remaining 11.6% were tallied as Other.

During the audit scope, ownership changes occurred in 12.6% of this group, with 2.3% having more than one ownership change.

Table 12						
Owner Type with Number of Cases and						
Ownership Changes Who were Not Sent to Court						
For the Period January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023						
Owner Type	# Cases Not Sent to Court	%	One Ownership Change	%	Two or More Ownership Changes	%
Owner Occupied	1,801	14.4%	127	7.1%	16	0.9%
Individual	4,721	37.8%	834	17.7%	123	2.6%
LLC	2,295	18.4%	548	23.9%	113	4.9%
LP	545	4.4%	51	9.4%	1	0.2%
City of Pittsburgh	1,742	14.0%	57	3.3%	6	0.3%
Other	1,376	11.0%	**	**	**	**
Total	12,480	100%	1,617	13.0%	259	2.1%
<i>**Too many subclasses of owner types comprise this category to be meaningful.</i>						
<i>Source: Code Violations data provided by PLI and Allegheny County Real Estate portal</i>						

In the cases which were not sent to court, individuals made up the largest proportion of owners (37.8%), followed by LLCs (18.4%), then owner occupied (14.4%), and then LPs (4.4%). The City of Pittsburgh accounted for 14% of cases that did not escalate to court.

During the scope of the audit, ownership changes occurred in 13% of this group, with 2.1% having more than one ownership change.

Here is a summary comparing owner types that did and did not escalate to court between January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2023:

- Cases sent to court were more heavily concentrated among individuals and LLCs compared to cases not sent to court. Individuals represented 45.2% of court cases versus 37.8% of non-court cases, and LLCs accounted for 22.1% versus 18.4%, respectively.
- Owner-occupied properties comprised 17.6% of court cases and 14.4% of non-court cases, while LPs were slightly more common in the non-court group (4.4% versus 3.1%).
- The ‘Other’ category remained similar across both groups (approximately 11%).
- Ownership changes occurred in both groups at comparable overall rates, with slight variations by owner type: individuals and LLCs showed higher percentages of one-time changes in the non-court group, while LPs exhibited higher change rates in the court group. Multiple ownership changes were concentrated among Individuals and LLCs in both cohorts, with owner-occupied properties and LPs showing minimal turnover.

RESOLUTION ITEM #8: AGE OF DEFENDANTS

Auditors were unable to obtain data on defendant ages, as this information is generally not reported by departments and not tracked by the courts and, therefore, not easily attainable.

RESOLUTION ITEM #9: CLEAN AND LIENS

Auditors again utilized the Workflow (inspections) tab of the data provided by PLI to identify the number of case numbers routed to DPW for clean and liens. These cases were identified via outcomes of ‘Refer to Cleanup’ and ‘Send to Clean & Lien’ and were linked to completion dates indicated on the General Info tab. A completed clean and lien indicated a case status of ‘Closed,’ while a status with ‘Clean & Lien’ meant that the case was still pending. A ‘Cancelled’ status meant the case was created in error.

Based on the data provided, Table 13 shows the auditors identified 2,279 case numbers routed to DPW for clean and liens. As of June 12, 2024, DPW had closed 1,079 (47.3%) cases; 1,198 (52.6%) outcomes were still pending; and two (.1%) case files were cancelled.

Status of Case Number	# of Violations Sent to Court	%
Cancelled	2	0.1%
Clean-and-Lien	1,198	52.6%
Closed	1,079	47.3%
	2,279	100.0%

Sources: Code Violations Data provided by PLI

In addition to the information presented in Table 13, ES foremen identified and routed 43 additional case files to other DPW staff to perform a clean and lien on properties in 2023. Of those 43 cases, as of June 12, 2024, DPW had completed four (9.3%) cases with 39 (90.7%) outcomes still pending.

RESOLUTION ITEM #10: RECURRING VIOLATIONS BY LOCATION AND TYPE

Auditors developed a full listing of all 45,413 cases found in the Computronix data set, which contained 58,012 violations, for an average of 1.3 violations per case. The top 10 most cited, or most recurring, violations accounted for 34,638 (60%) of all violations, and those categories were as follows: Weeds (10,619); Accumulation of Rubbish and Garbage (6,774); Vacant

Structures and Land (4,059); Unsafe Structure (3,471); Structure Unfit for Human Occupancy (2,249); Record Not Provided (2,128); Permit Required (1,497); Stop Work Order (1,432); Sidewalks and Driveways (1,388); and Municipal Waste and Recyclables Collection (timing) (1,021). Of those 34,638 violations, 10,061 (29%) of them progressed to court.

Analysis of the 10,061 court progressions was broken out into three tables: Table 14, Table 15, and Table 16. The color coding shown in all three tables highlight trends in the number of court-case occurrences per category as follows: lower 30 percentile in green, the median range in yellow and orange, and the upper 30 percentile in red.

Please also note the following:

- For Tables 14 and 15, auditors used the same classifications of owner types as established in Tables 11 and 12 of this report. These classifications are as follows: owner occupied, individual, LLC, LPs, City of Pittsburgh, and Other.
- Table 14 shows a ratio of violation types to owner types. This expresses how many violations of specific code descriptions occur within the owner-type classifications.
- Table 15 shows the ratio by owner types to wards. This expresses the raw number of violations that occur within the owner-type classifications and locations (i.e., wards).
- Table 16 shows the ratio by violation types to wards. This expresses the number of violations within specific code descriptions that occur by location within the City (i.e., wards).

All three tables are provided on the following pages, along with summaries of each accordingly.

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Table 14 Top 10 Violations Escalated to Court by Owner Type For the Period January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023						
Code Description	City of Pittsburgh	Individual	LLC	LP	Owner Occupied	Other
Weeds	27	1,694	624	66	641	276
Accumulation of rubbish and garbage	10	971	477	55	316	131
Vacant Structures and Land	16	678	135	4	156	99
Unsafe Structure	9	493	180	12	114	117
Structure unfit for human occupancy	3	265	83	6	79	76
Record Not Provided	0	43	112	32	7	95
Permit Required	1	264	216	9	143	25
Sidewalks & Driveways	3	243	234	22	86	49
Stop Work Order	1	207	87	29	145	72
Municipal Waste and Recyclables Collection (timing)	0	57	41	10	5	10
Subtotal	70	4,915	2,189	245	1,692	950
%	0.7%	48.9%	21.8%	2.4%	16.8%	9.4%
Total	10,061					
<i>Source: Code Violations data provided by PLI and Allegheny County Real Estate portal</i>						

Owner-type distributions shown in Table 14 can be summarized as follows:

- Individual owners account for the majority, 48.9%, of all court progressions.
- LLCs are second-most recurring at 21.8% of all court progressions.
- Owner occupied violations account for 16.8% of all court progressions.
- LPs account for 2.4% of all court progressions.
- City-owned properties account for 0.7% of all court progressions.

- Owners in the ‘Other’ category account for the remaining 9.4% of all court progressions.

Violation-type distributions shown in Table 14 can be summarized as follows:

- By and large, violations for weeds were the most recurring at 33.1% of all court progressions.
- Violations due to accumulation of rubbish and garbage were the second-most recurring at 19.5% of all court progressions.
- Vacant structures and land account for 10.8% of all court progressions.
- Unsafe structures account for 9.2% of all court progressions.
- All other categories accounted for the remaining 27.4% of all court progressions.

Council’s resolution also requested data on the most egregious and recurring violations by location. Therefore, auditors used wards to express the ratio of violations by owner type and location.

Table 15 below shows the number of violations per owner type and per ward accordingly for the 10,061 violations that escalated to court.¹

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¹ The Appendix of this report includes two exhibits:

- Exhibit A is a map of City wards and neighborhoods.
- Exhibit B is a map of Magisterial District Courts.

Wards	City of Pittsburgh	Individual	LLC	LP	Owner Occupied	Other	Total
1st Ward	0	16	18	7	1	9	51
2nd Ward	0	3	2	1	0	6	12
3rd Ward	0	8	10	1	0	20	39
4th Ward	1	148	64	26	26	30	295
5th Ward	2	51	24	1	9	31	118
6th Ward	0	52	47	4	17	27	147
7th Ward	0	31	17	9	27	11	95
8th Ward	0	57	46	15	36	14	168
9th Ward	0	56	97	16	24	6	199
10th Ward	1	115	106	13	53	33	321
11th Ward	1	71	63	4	48	27	214
12th Ward	2	318	69	6	63	55	513
13th Ward	7	582	76	3	122	142	932
14th Ward	2	146	32	13	145	31	369
15th Ward	5	249	101	1	113	28	497
16th Ward	0	204	122	13	53	49	441
17th Ward	0	144	120	18	33	20	335
18th Ward	4	366	151	8	88	49	666
19th Ward	6	329	187	15	149	49	735
20th Ward	11	410	177	21	126	60	805
21st Ward	0	75	50	3	19	20	167
22nd Ward	0	32	21	8	8	8	77
23rd Ward	0	47	48	7	18	14	134
24th Ward	6	106	57	1	35	13	218
25th Ward	2	164	50	1	26	28	271
26th Ward	12	247	65	10	69	31	434
27th Ward	2	256	84	4	84	39	469
28th Ward	0	99	29	2	61	17	208
29th Ward	2	159	108	6	64	30	369
30th Ward	4	264	111	8	86	38	511
31st Ward	0	50	11	0	44	8	113
32nd Ward	0	60	26	0	45	7	138
Subtotal	70	4,915	2,189	245	1,692	950	10,061
%	0.7%	48.9%	21.8%	2.4%	16.8%	9.4%	100.0%

Source: Code Violations data provided by PLI and Allegheny County Real Estate portal

The distribution of violations by ward shown in Table 15 can be summarized as follows:

- Ward 13 (North and South Homewood and East Hills) received the highest number of violations (932) that escalated to court, accounting for 9.3% of the total.
- Ward 20 (Sheraden, Chartiers City, Esplen, West End, Banksville and Elliott) received the second highest number of violations (805) that escalated to court, accounting for 8.0% of the population.

- Ward 19 (Duquesne Heights, South Shore, Mount Washington, Beechview and Brookline)) received the third highest number of violations (735) that escalated to court, accounting for 7.3% of the population.
- Ward 18 (Allentown, Bon Air) received the fourth highest number of violations (666) that escalated to court, accounting for 6.6% of the population.
- The top four wards listed above account for 31.2% of all violations that escalated to court within the audit scope and all other wards accounted for the remaining 68.8%.
- Wards 1 (southern CBD, Bluff), 2 (northern CBD, Strip District), and 3 (Lower Hill) represented the locations with the lowest number of violations that escalated to court, altogether accounting for only 1%.

Auditors then took the number of violations that escalated to court by violation type and linked them with wards. This is to show the trend of violation types by location. This data is shown in Table 16 below.

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Table 16
Top 10 Violations Escalated to Court by Ward and Violation
For the Period January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023

	Weeds (2015 IPMC 302.4)	Accumulation of Rubbish and Garbage (2015 IPMC 308.1)	Vacant Structures and Land (2015 IPMC 301.3)	Unsafe Structures (2015 IPMC 108.1.1)	Structure unfit for human occupancy (2015 IPMC 108.1.3)	Record Not Provided (2015 IFC 901.6.2)	Permit Required (UCC 403.62[a])	Stop Work Order (UCC 403.81)	Sidewalks & Driveways (2015 IPMC 302.3)	Municipal Waste and Recyclables Collection (timing) (619.04[B])
1st Ward	5	5	0	15	4	5	1	2	14	0
2nd Ward	0	0	0	1	1	3	0	1	6	0
3rd Ward	19	9	0	7	2	0	0	1	1	0
4th Ward	84	54	0	22	6	14	17	35	15	48
5th Ward	23	27	0	31	19	2	5	6	3	2
6th Ward	46	15	3	9	6	11	12	26	18	1
7th Ward	9	8	0	2	1	18	5	8	40	4
8th Ward	36	36	0	8	5	13	16	27	25	2
9th Ward	42	29	1	2	1	7	40	54	23	0
10th Ward	108	55	16	33	18	2	36	37	16	0
11th Ward	58	46	12	13	2	8	23	22	26	4
12th Ward	165	69	165	54	30	3	7	6	11	3
13th Ward	307	123	310	90	75	2	7	8	8	2
14th Ward	66	46	7	12	14	13	33	32	138	8
15th Ward	210	65	13	38	36	3	69	40	20	3
16th Ward	140	119	6	31	15	16	51	44	8	11
17th Ward	77	78	3	27	6	19	39	55	14	17
18th Ward	239	155	114	90	24	7	13	15	6	3
19th Ward	300	153	29	38	16	46	57	46	45	5
20th Ward	310	200	73	64	53	24	43	27	10	1
21st Ward	34	20	16	26	15	6	19	11	20	0
22nd Ward	17	8	1	5	3	11	13	9	10	0
23rd Ward	29	18	17	5	11	7	26	15	6	0
24th Ward	55	52	22	31	19	1	16	14	8	0
25th Ward	54	34	42	47	28	1	32	25	8	0
26th Ward	169	109	32	67	21	3	13	12	8	0
27th Ward	197	90	50	65	30	7	7	16	7	0
28th Ward	90	43	20	15	8	6	11	9	6	0
29th Ward	146	89	41	15	13	20	16	14	7	8
30th Ward	187	150	71	53	20	6	8	5	10	1
31st Ward	38	28	7	6	7	2	16	8	1	0
32nd Ward	68	27	17	3	3	3	7	7	3	0
Subtotal	3,328	1,960	1,088	925	512	289	658	637	541	123
%	33.1%	19.5%	10.8%	9.2%	5.1%	2.9%	6.5%	6.3%	5.4%	1.2%

Source: Code Violations data provided by PLI and Allegheny County Real Estate portal

The distribution of court-escalated violations by violation type and ward can be summarized as follows:

- Wards 13 (North and South Homewood and East Hills), 19 (Duquesne Heights, South Shore, Mount Washington, Beechview and Brookline), and 20 (Sheraden, Chartiers City, Esplen, West End, Banksville and Elliott) accumulated the highest numbers of violations that escalated to court for Weeds.
- Wards 18 (Allentown, Bon Air), 19 (Duquesne Heights, South Shore, Mount Washington, Beechview and Brookline), and 20 (Sheraden, Chartiers City, Esplen, West

End, Banksville and Elliott) accumulated the highest numbers of violations that escalated to court for accumulation of rubbish and garbage.

- Wards 12 (Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar, Larimer, Homewood West), 13 (North and South Homewood and East Hills) and 18 (Allentown, Bon Air), accumulated the highest numbers of violations that escalated to court for vacant structures and land.
- Wards 13 (North and South Homewood and East Hills), 18 (Allentown, Bon Air), and 26 (Perry North and South, Spring Hill-City View, Northview Heights, Summer Hill) accumulated the highest numbers of violations that escalated to court for unsafe structures.
- Wards 13 (North and South Homewood and East Hills), 15 (Greenfield, Hazelwood, Glen Hazel), and 20 (Sheraden, Chartiers City, Esplen, West End, Banksville and Elliott) accumulated the highest numbers of violations that escalated to court for structures unfit for human occupancies.
- Wards 19 (Duquesne Heights, South Shore, Mount Washington, Beechview and Brookline), 20 (Sheraden, Chartiers City, Esplen, West End, Banksville and Elliott), and 29 (Carrick) accumulated the highest numbers of violations that escalated to court for records not provided.
- Wards 15 (Greenfield, Hazelwood, Glen Hazel), 16 (eastern South Side Flats and Slopes, Arlington, Arlington Heights, city side of Mount Oliver, St. Clair), and 19 (Duquesne Heights, South Shore, Mount Washington, Beechview and Brookline), accumulated the highest numbers of violations that escalated to court for permits required.
- Wards 9 (Central Lawrenceville), 17 (western South Side Flats and Slopes), and 19 (Duquesne Heights, South Shore, Mount Washington, Beechview and Brookline) accumulated the highest numbers of violations that escalated to court for stop work orders.
- Wards 7 (Shadyside), 14 (Squirrel Hill North and South, Point Breeze, Regent Square, Swisshelm Park), and 19 (Duquesne Heights, South Shore, Mount Washington, Beechview and Brookline), accumulated the highest numbers of violations that escalated to court for sidewalks and driveways.
- Wards 4 (West, South, and North Oakland), 16 (eastern South Side Flats and Slopes, Arlington, Arlington Heights, City side of Mount Oliver, St. Clair), and 17 (western South Side Flats and Slopes), accumulated the highest numbers of violations that escalated to court for municipal waste and recyclables collection timings.

ITEM #11, SAMPLE TESTING OF CASE FILE INFORMATION

Auditors also requested documentation of a limited sample of case numbers from PLI, DPW, and DOMI. Auditors administered testing procedures on three aspects of inspector operations: 1) accuracy of inputs into the Computronix system, (2) timeliness of inspections, and (3) completeness of documentation. A non-statistical selection process was used to choose samples from the data. The sample population is comprised of case numbers that exhibited probability of both conforming and also not conforming with departmental expectations of inputs and compliance periods.

PLI SAMPLE TESTING

In regard to inputs, PLI provided a data dictionary indicating the meaning of various outcomes. In addition, for case numbers with criminal complaints, PLI informed auditors of the following:

- If violations are resolved upon pre-court inspections, inspectors are to input ‘Withdrawn’ as the outcome. This indicates that the violation is abated.
- If violations are not resolved upon pre-court inspection, inspectors are to input ‘Continue to Court.’ This indicates that the violation was not abated and that the case will move forward with its scheduled court hearing.
- If the case number continues to court and the court rules a decision, the inspector is then to input ‘recorded,’ which closes the case.

PLI also provided auditors with various internal policies and procedures, including a document called *Operations Inspectors Daily Duties*. This document was created in August 2020 and revised in October 2022. It outlined the daily job functions, administrative duties, inspection protocols, and expectations of documentation. Among various other expectations, this document listed the following:

- Inspectors are to complete inspections within three business days from the complaint request or view of any other violation noted during normal inspection duties. Inspectors are also expected to follow guidelines as to the length of time allowed for the property owner to bring the parcel into compliance. Although not written in policy, PLI reported to the auditors that the compliance periods are between one and 30 days based on the violation type. Computronix automatically calculates these dates for the inspectors.
- Inspectors are to investigate properties with scheduled court hearings three business days before the hearing or, if applicable, when the responsible party informs the inspector that the violation has been abated.
- When performing inspections, inspectors are to file notes on any information relevant to the department, including neighbor, owner, or tenant contact information; summaries of court notes and direction provided by the Magisterial District Judge (e.g., reasons for

continuances); and internal warnings to other inspectors about pertinent past interactions with the owner.

- Inspectors are to take photos on-site for every inspection and pre-court inspection. Photos should depict the violation, be labeled, and show the violation location.
- Generally, inspectors are to issue a compliance letter for violations found up to three times. Upon the third failed inspection, the inspector produces a criminal complaint that is sent to the applicable Magisterial District Court. Compliance letters drafted by inspectors are to provide clear and detailed information requiring the application of relevant permits or means of abatement so that the property owner can take action to abate violation(s) present.

For PLI, auditors tested the inspector adherence to the policies and procedures outlined above. Auditors requested and received case file documentation for 52 separate cases. The auditors then conducted three different tests: inputs, timeliness, and documentation. At the conclusion of these tests, auditors documented the following results.

PLI INPUTS

Two tests were conducted to evaluate the inspector accuracy of inputs into Computronix. The first test was to evaluate if the inspector entered an input of 'recorded' to close out a case that escalated to court and received a verdict. The second test was to ensure all court dates and outcome inputs into the system aligned with case file documentation.

- In most samples, inspector inputs were not relevant to the completion of inspections because the case did not escalate to court. This was noted in approximately 87% of case files.
- PLI inspectors did not close case files by inputting 'recorded' in 50% of applicable samples. Also, Computronix court dates and/or inputs of outcomes did not align with inspector case history report documentation in 50% of the applicable cases.

PLI TIMELINESS

Three tests were conducted on timeliness: the initial inspection occurring within three business days of the 311 complaint; a pre-court inspection occurring three business days before the hearing date; and, lastly, the appropriate range of days being observed for each violation's compliance period.

- In 57% of the cases, one or more of the timeliness tests were not a relevant factor in the completion of inspections. This would apply to cases that did not originate via 311; cases that did not progress to a criminal complaint and, therefore, no pre-court inspection was required; and 'clean and liens', which do not require re-inspection. Also, the auditors identified 1% of the case files were missing information and were not included in the 311 complaint test.

- Cases that required initial inspections within three days of the 311 complaint did not receive timely inspections in 47% of these samples. PLI did not meet the pre-court inspection standard in 17% of the applicable samples. PLI's timeframes for re-inspection can vary, depending on the type of violation but did not meet its re-inspection expectations in 69% of the applicable samples.

PLI DOCUMENTATION

Three tests were conducted on case file documentation: inspectors documented sufficient information so that the violation could be understood; photos were taken of the violation during the inspections, were labeled, and clearly depicted the violation; and lastly, that there was sufficient information provided to the property owner in compliance letters to remedy the issue and, if necessary, obtain the requisite permits.

- Six percent of the samples did not apply to the compliance letter test. These case files were 'clean and lien' requests that were sent directly to DPW and did not require correspondence with the property owners.
- In approximately 58% of the samples, the documentation was not clear or complete enough to determine the status or context of the case file. In 48%, photos were not included or did not depict the violation. In 36%, compliance requests issued to violators did not include enough relevant information to the violator to ensure expectation of abatement.

DPW SAMPLE TESTING

DPW administrators informed auditors that, as of January 2025, policies and procedures were in rough draft form, but the documents given had also been sent to inspectors with read-and-acknowledgement receipts. In regard to inspector protocols, expectations, and documentation, DPW provided two documents: the first being a draft called *DPW Inspection Guidance*, which was distributed by DPW to its inspectors on November 17, 2023, and the second being *Operating Policies: Anti-Litter Inspector Daily Duties* drafted in January 2025.

These documents listed the following directives:

- Inspectors will complete scheduled investigations within three business days from the complaint request.
- DPW also conducts pre-court inspections three days before the court date.
- Inspectors are required to issue three requests for compliance letters each time a violation is found. Upon the third failed inspection, the inspector will produce a criminal complaint to be sent to the applicable Magistrate Court. Clear and detailed information should be provided in the request for compliance so that the recipient can take the appropriate

action to abate the violation(s). In addition, properties with a history of non-compliance may be issued criminal complaints upon first inspection, and dead-end property cases should not be sent to court.

- Photos are required to be taken onsite that clearly depict the violation for the first investigation and pre-court inspection.
- During investigations, inspectors are required to take file notes on any information relevant to the department, including neighbor, owner, or tenant contact information; summaries of court notes and direction provided by the Magisterial District Judge (e.g., reasons for continuances); and internal warnings to other inspectors (e.g., sovereign citizen).

Although these drafts of policies were not in effect for the majority of the audit scope, auditors performed a review on a limited sample of cases in order to provide the department with insight into its general compliance with expectations.

DPW INPUTS

The same two input tests conducted on PLI samples were conducted on DPW samples.

- Input of court dates and outcomes were not applicable in 47% of the samples because the cases did not escalate to court.
- DPW inspectors did not close case files appropriately in 25% of the applicable cases. Also, Computronix court dates and/or outcomes inputs did not align with inspector case history report documentation in 50% of the applicable cases.

DPW TIMELINESS

Two tests were conducted on timeliness: 1) the initial inspection occurring within three business days of the 311 complaint and 2) a pre-court inspection occurring three business days before the hearing date.

- Twenty percent of the samples did not apply to timeliness tests. This affected samples that did not initiate via 311 complaints, samples that were withdrawn before court dates, and samples that did not have enough information to perform the test.
- DPW did not make initial inspections within three days of the 311 complaint in 25% of these samples. DPW did not meet the pre-court inspection standard in 17% of the applicable samples.

DPW DOCUMENTATION

Three tests were conducted on case file documentation: inspectors documented sufficient information so that the violation could be understood; photos were taken of the violation at first investigations, at criminal complaint investigations, and at pre-court inspections; and that sufficient information was provided to the property owner in compliance letters to remedy the violation and, if necessary, obtain the requisite permits.

- All tests were applicable to the DPW samples provided to auditors.
- Twenty-seven percent of sample files did not contain clear enough documentation to determine the status or context of the case. For example, some file notes did not indicate the reason a violation was dropped.
- In 53% of the samples, photos were either missing, did not clearly depict the violation, or did not include the date of the violation.
- In 47% of case files, compliance requests issued to violators did not include enough relevant information to the violator to ensure expectation of abatement. For example, in the compliance letter corrective action field, inspectors copied the City code violation definition instead of detailing specific areas remediation was needed.

DOMI SAMPLE TESTING

DOMI does not, as of yet, have written policies and procedures regarding the code violation process. Instead, inspectors and their supervisors meet weekly to review cases and prioritize responses to cases. DOMI does follow certain general procedures that were discussed during meetings with the auditors, some of which are listed below.

- Inputs into the Computronix system for the proper dates and outcomes recorded for court cases are the same as they are for PLI and DPW.
- DOMI aims to respond to 311 complaints within seven days.
- DOMI inspectors are to issue two compliance letters to the property owner before issuing a criminal complaint on the third inspection, if the violation is still present. DOMI indicated that this process should take approximately 45 days.
- DOMI's compliance timeframe for reinspection is 14 days, and DOMI inspectors should not reinspect for violations until a full 14 days has elapsed following the prior inspection.
- Inspectors are to investigate properties with scheduled court hearings within three business days before the hearing. However, DOMI stated their best practice is to complete an investigation the day before since they allow the defendant up to the “11th hour” to correct the violation.

The auditors selected a sample size of 15 DOMI case files to test the same three documentation areas as used for PLI and DPW.

DOMI INPUTS

Again, accuracy of inspector's inputs into Computronix was tested. The auditors conducted the same tests used in the PLI input testing, since all departments use the same software system and procedures.

- Input of court dates and outcomes were not applicable in 16% of the samples because the cases did not escalate to court or the case was missing data.
- DOMI inspectors did not close case files or did not record a final decision appropriately in 67% of the applicable cases. Also, Computronix court dates and/or outcomes inputs did not align with inspector case history documentation in 23% of the applicable cases.

DOMI TIMELINESS

Three tests were conducted on timeliness: the initial inspection occurring within three business days of the 311 complaint, a reinspection not occurring until after 14 days of the prior investigation, a pre-court inspection occurring three business days within the court date.

- Thirty six percent of case files did not apply to timeliness tests due to the following: no originating 311 complaint; a re-inspection was not required because the criminal complaint was issued on the first investigation; pre-court inspection did not apply, since the case did not escalate to court; or the case file was missing information needed for testing.
- Cases that required initial inspections within seven days of the 311 complaint did not meet this expectation in 13% of the samples. In the remaining 87% of applicable samples, DOMI's initial inspections were administered between one and six days from the complaint.
- There were 49 total reinspections administered within the 15 samples. Of samples that required one or more reinspections following the initial inspection, 57% of DOMI's reinspections were administered before 14 days had elapsed and 4% administered at exactly 14 days. In addition, auditors documented the following reinspection timeframes: eight reinspections (16%) were administered between 15 and 20 days following prior inspections and 11 reinspections (23%) were administered after 20 days of prior inspections.
- DOMI inspectors did not meet the pre-court inspection expectation in 83% of the samples that required pre-court inspections.

DOMI DOCUMENTATION

Three tests were conducted on DOMI case file documentation: inspectors documented sufficient information so that the violation could be understood; photos were taken that depict the violation; and sufficient information was provided to the property owner in compliance letters to remedy the issue and, if necessary, obtain the requisite permits.

- In approximately 40% of case files, the documentation was not clear or complete enough to determine the status or context of the case file.
- In 40% of case files, photos were not included or the photos did not depict the violation.
- In 27% of case files, compliance requests issued to violators did not include enough relevant information to the violator to ensure understanding of the process of abatement.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDING #1: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Of the three City departments that handle Citywide code violations, PLI has policies and procedures implemented, DPW has policies and procedures drafted, and DOMI does not have written policies and procedures. None of the departments have policies specific to input procedures for closing out case files or timeframes for compliance and reinspection.

- Undocumented input procedures can result in a higher number of inconsistent system inputs, which affects the accuracy and validity of case file data stored in Computronix. Auditors identified 852 case numbers that were initiated in 2021 with ‘in court’ statuses as of May 2024 and 746 cases that were initiated in 2022 with ‘in court’ statuses as of May 2024. This could represent an input-error margin of approximately 6% of all 27,291 case numbers logged in 2021 and 2022.
- While inspection timeframes are hardcoded into Computronix for each department, not having them indicated in policy makes it difficult to determine the compliance timeframes for each code type. In addition, DOMI’s compliance expectation specifically for ‘Removal of Snow and Ice’ may require additional review by the department before it is implemented into official policy.

Additional details specific to each department are detailed below.

PLI

- PLI implemented policies and procedures to govern inspector operations in August 2020. These policies provide a good guide for daily functions; however, the policies do not include the following: (1) an expectation that inspectors select ‘recorded’ to close out case files, and (2) an outline of the expected timeframe for compliance for each violation

type. PLI advised auditors of these expectations via email.

DPW

- DPW’s inspector policies are in rough-draft form, and these drafts were communicated to their inspectors in the latter half of 2023. However, these drafts do not include (1) an expectation that inspectors select ‘recorded’ to close out case files and (2) the 14-day timeframe for compliance and reinspection of violations.
- DPW does not currently have policies and procedures drafted or implemented for clean and liens.

DOMI

- DOMI does not have written policies and procedures drafted or implemented.
- DOMI currently operates under a 14-day compliance period for all violations, including ‘Removal of Snow and Ice.’ However, the department indicated that snow accumulation is typically not significant in Pittsburgh over 14-day periods. When snow and ice do accumulate for extended periods of time, a 14-day compliance period will not incentivize timely abatement of this specific violation type.

RECOMMENDATION #1:

1a: All three departments should coordinate to align relevant and applicable policies and procedures and then formalize them in writing where needed. All three departments may benefit from scheduling regular senior-level meetings in order to coordinate efforts to improve code enforcement efficiency, expectations, and standardization.

1b: Service-level timeframe expectations for inspections not mandated by City legislation or code should be reviewed on a code-by-code basis. When changes are necessary, inspection and reinspection timeframes should be adjusted and hardcoding fixes coordinated with System Operations. PLI, DPW, and DOMI should then update written policies and procedures accordingly, as applicable.

FINDING #2: TESTING OF CASE FILE DOCUMENTATION

PLI, DPW, and DOMI provided case file documentation for all the samples requested by the auditors. However, a significant portion of the samples were either insufficient for understanding the conditions of the violations or missing specific items.

Additional details specific to each department are detailed below.

PLI

- Of the 52 PLI samples provided to auditors, there were 30 (58%) instances of unclear case notes and 25 (48%) instances of missing or unclear case photos. In addition, 42 of the 52 samples required issuance of compliance letters and 15 (36%) of these letters

contained unclear language.

- One sample tested by auditors was added to PLI's dead-end property list due to the owner being deceased. However, four out of seven cases opened on the parcel were not documented in accordance with PLI's dead-end policy, resulting in multiple unnecessary steps: 13 investigations, two pre-court inspections, 11 letters, three referrals to court, and three court-case withdrawals. One of the cases was voided after three inspections.

DPW

- Of the 15 DPW samples provided to auditors, there were four (27%) instances of unclear case notes, eight (53%) instances of missing or unclear case photos, and seven (47%) instances of unclear information indicated within compliance letters issued to the violator.

DOMI

- Of the 15 DOMI samples provided to auditors, there were six (40%) instances of unclear case notes, six (40%) instances of missing or unclear case photos, and four (27%) instances of unclear information indicated within compliance letters issued to the violator.

RECOMMENDATION #2:

2a: All three departments should incorporate a sample-based supervisory review on case files to ensure documentation aligns with daily operating policies. This review should ensure parcel research is appropriately conducted on case files to avoid unnecessary processing steps.

2b: PLI's parcel research should be conducted in accordance with Section 6 of its 'Dead End Cases - Programmatic Inspection Operations' policy, while DPW and DOMI should draft and implement policies that require parcel research and specified procedures for dead-end properties.

FINDING #3: TESTING OF TIMELINESS

Auditors found that timeliness was inconsistent for all departments based on the samples provided. This is likely due to the high caseload paired with limited staff. However, inspector hours are also not tracked, which limits any time-management analysis of this condition.

Additional details specific to each department are detailed below.

PLI

- Of the samples provided to auditors, 17 cases required initial inspections within three days of the 311 complaint, and PLI did not meet this expectation in eight (47%) of these

samples.

- PLI requires that pre-court inspections occur three business days before a hearing but did not meet this standard in one (17%) of six applicable samples.
- PLI's timeframes for re-inspection can vary, depending on the type of violation; PLI did not meet its re-inspection expectations in 29 (69%) of 42 applicable samples.

DPW

- Of the samples provided to auditors, 12 cases required initial inspections within three days of the 311 complaint, and DPW did not meet this expectation in three (25%) of these samples.
- DPW requires that pre-court inspections occur three business days before a hearing but did not meet this standard in two (17%) of 12 applicable samples.
- Auditors identified 2,279 clean and lien referrals routed to DPW, and there were 1,198 (53%) cases still pending completion as of June 2024. There were 165 cases that were pending for two years (since 2022).

DOMI

- Of the samples provided to auditors, eight cases required initial inspections within seven days of the 311 complaint, and DOMI did not meet this expectation in only one (13%) sample.
- DOMI's compliance letters require that pre-court inspections occur three business days before a hearing but did not meet this standard in 10 (83%) of 12 applicable samples.
- Reinspection should occur after 14 days have elapsed since the prior investigation to allow the recipient time to remediate, and DOMI inspections occurred too early in 57% of the reinspections required and exactly at 14 days in 4% of the required reinspections.

RECOMMENDATION #3:

3a: PLI, DPW, and DOMI should track and log inspectors' hours required to bring code violation cases before local magistrates. This data should be used to determine whether or not additional staffing is needed and/or if the time management of case files is a relevant factor.

FINDING #4: VIOLATIONS ON CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES

A cohesive process for code violations connected to City-owned properties is not in place. As a result, auditors identified a significant number of investigations on City-owned properties, including properties under the designations 'For Sale' and 'Hold for Study.' Two hundred forty-three investigations were administered on 56 violations of City-owned properties that went to

court, and 4,087 investigations were administered on the 1,742 violations of City-owned properties that did not go to court. In total, 4,330 investigations were administered on City-owned properties during the scope of the audit. Therefore, resources could be unnecessarily spent on inspections, mailings, or even time in court accordingly.

Additional details specific to each department is provided below.

PLI

- PLI's 'Dead End Cases - Programmatic Inspection Operations' policy provides guidance on City-owned parcels but does not appear to address various scenarios inspectors will encounter.
- This policy indicates that City-owned properties should be referred to DPW for clean and lien services on first investigation; however, the majority of the case files connected to City-owned properties had two or more investigations documented. Separately, DPW advised auditors that it does not typically handle clean and liens on 'For Sale' properties.

DPW

- DPW may, by default of PLI's policy, receive a significant number of case referrals for City-owned properties, even though DPW does not typically handle City-owned properties. Therefore, additional time or resources could be spent routing clean-up activities to the appropriate facilitator.
- DPW does not currently have policies drafted or implemented regarding City-owned properties.

DOMI

- DOMI does not currently have policies drafted or implemented regarding City-owned properties.

RECOMMENDATION #4:

4a: PLI, DPW, and DOMI should discuss process-related solutions to managing code violations on City-owned properties, along with Finance, and implement the solution into policies and procedures.

Written responses from each department are appended on the following pages.

COREY O'CONNOR
MAYOR



DAVID GREEN
DIRECTOR

CITY OF PITTSBURGH
DEPARTMENT OF PERMITS, LICENSES & INSPECTIONS

April 23, 2026

Rachael Heisler, City Controller
Office of the City Controller
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

RE: Performance Audit of Citywide Code Violations

Dear Controller Heisler,

I appreciate your office's independent performance audit of the Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections (PLI) code enforcement as requested by Resolution 18 of 2024 for the period from January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2023. PLI has a strong history of data transparency that serves as a means of public accountability. Your team's insight into potential performance risks based on their analysis and data sampling raises this accountability and will inform our inspection teams enforcement priorities. Below, I have included a summary of your findings and recommendations and then responded to each.

Two critical events occurred before the beginning of this audit. On May 19, 2020, the OneStopPGH system added code enforcement code enforcement records. While the system was operational for seven months before the audit period, the COVID-19 Pandemic, which began in March of 2020, significantly limited PLI's code enforcement activities. I expect these operational issues affected the PLI team's performance for the early period of the audit.

For the public's understanding, PLI has three types of code enforcement records:

1. A complaint record that documents the information provided to the City's 311 center by the public.
2. A case file record that documents PLI's investigation of the complaint, including whether we obtained evidence of a violation, which regulations were violated, our notices (requests for compliance), and court outcomes.
3. A programmatic inspection that documents PLI's periodic inspection for specific purposes. These include fire inspections to verify maintenance of life safety systems, condemned properties to evaluate the relative hazard of the property on a scale of 1 to 4, dead-end properties to confirm that property ownership has not changed, and daycares to confirm lead inspections.

Lastly, I have two quick things to clarify. First, one of PLI's divisions has changed names since the audit began. The Operations Division is now the Code Enforcement Division. Second, the data provided for the audit includes investigations performed by PLI's Construction Division.

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION 1: Policies and Procedures

Of the three City departments that handle Citywide code violations, PLI has policies and procedures implemented, DPW has policies and procedures drafted, and DOMI does not have written policies and procedures. None of the departments have policies specific to input procedures for closing out case files or timeframes for compliance and reinspection.

- PLI implemented policies and procedures to govern inspector operations in August 2020. These policies provide a good guide for daily functions; however, the policies do not include the following: (1) an expectation that inspectors select 'recorded' to close out case files, and (2) an outline of the expected timeframe for compliance for each violation type. PLI advised auditors of these expectations via email.

1a: All three departments should coordinate to align relevant and applicable policies and procedures and then formalize them in writing where needed. All three departments may benefit from scheduling regular meetings together in order to coordinate efforts to improve code enforcement efficiency, expectations, and standardization.

1b: Service-level timeframe expectations for inspections not mandated by City legislation or code should be reviewed on a code-by-code basis. When changes are necessary, inspection and reinspection timeframes should be adjusted and hardcoding fixes coordinated with System Operations. PLI, DPW, and DOMI should then update written policies and procedures accordingly, as applicable.

AUDITEE RESPONSE:

Recommendation 1a is a common sense and practical step. PLI is committed to collaborative work within our department, across the city and county government, and with community groups and the public. Diverse perspectives ensure more thorough analysis and more creative and resilient solutions. PLI works closely with our sister agencies, the Department of Public Works (DPW) and Department of Mobility & Infrastructure (DOMI). Working together on code enforcement will benefit all three departments and the public.

Regularly reviewing standards, such as the timeframes for investigations is good policy, as identified in recommendation 1b is good policy. PLI plans to incorporate this recommendation into our workplan and evaluate adopting a policy to ensure regular review and updates to the OneStopPGH system and our policies and procedures.

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION 2: Testing of Case File Documentation

PLI, DPW, and DOMI provided case file documentation for all the samples requested by the auditors. However, a significant portion of the samples were either insufficient for understanding the conditions of the violations or missing specific items.

- Of the 52 PLI samples provided to auditors, there were 30 (58%) instances of unclear case notes and 25 (48%) instances of missing or unclear case photos. In addition, 42 of the 52 samples required issuance of compliance letters and 15 (36%) of these letters contained unclear language.
- One sample tested by auditors was added to PLI's dead-end property list due to the owner being deceased. However, four out of seven cases opened on the parcel were not documented in accordance with PLI's dead-end policy, resulting in multiple unnecessary steps: 13 investigations, two pre-court inspections, 11 letters, three referrals to court, and three court-case withdrawals. One of the cases was voided after three inspections.

2a: All three departments should incorporate a sample-based supervisory review on case files to ensure documentation aligns with daily operating policies. This review should ensure parcel research is appropriately conducted on case files to avoid unnecessary processing steps.

AUDITEE RESPONSE:

The building department industry's best practice is regularly auditing the departments performance including categorizing errors by anticipated impact (minor, major, and life safety), setting goals for the error rate associated with each category, and comparing with the actual error rate.

PLI supervisors currently performs some rudimentary auditing of our code enforcement work. However, adopting a sample-based approach as recommended by item 2a and auditing performance based on our policies, is good strategy to improve our auditing practices.

PLI plans to incorporate this recommendation into our workplan. We expect to review and update our associated policies, share these audits results with staff, and incorporate staff training to standardize work and reduce the error rate.

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION 3: Testing of Timeliness

Auditors found that timeliness was inconsistent for all departments based on the samples provided. This is likely due to the high caseload paired with limited staff. However, inspector hours are also not tracked, which limits any time-management analysis of this condition.

- Of the samples provided to auditors, 17 cases required initial inspections within three days of the 311 complaint, and PLI did not meet this expectation in eight (47%) of these samples.
- PLI requires that pre-court inspections occur three business days before a hearing but did not meet this standard in one (17%) of six applicable samples.

- PLI's timeframes for re-inspection can vary, depending on the type of violation; PLI did not meet its re-inspection expectations in 29 (69%) of 42 applicable samples.

3a: PLI, DPW, and DOMI should track and log inspectors' hours required to bring code violation cases before local magistrates. This data should be used to determine whether or not additional staffing is needed and/or if the time management of case files is a relevant factor.

AUDITEE RESPONSE:

PLI can assess and audit the timeliness of investigations without tracking task time. Further by adopting a sample-based auditing approach, our supervisors can identify performance patterns and follow-up accordingly to either train staff, modify the OneStopPGH system, or work design to reduce the error rate. It is important to note that the type and nature of risk associated with timeliness varies based on the type of investigation. For example, performing an initial investigation after the prescribed timeframe is primarily a customer service issue that affects the member of the public who submitted the 311 complaint. Alternately, performing a subsequent inspection before the prescribed timeframe is potential legal issue that impacts the defendants. Therefore, PLI should set auditing standards to manage each type of risk appropriately.

PLI agrees with the importance of assessing work efficiency to determine appropriate staff capacity based on work volume and effective use of resources, such as time. However, modifying our work design and systems to track the time spent per recommendation 3a, is a significant time investment. Additionally, code enforcement is a collaborative effort involving the inspector, their supervisor, and the administrative staff of another PLI division who print notices and update case file records to identify hearing dates.

Before making changes with an unknown benefit, I think it is appropriate to analyze our existing data first to learn as much as possible. We can compare our work volume with staff work hours to understand the average time spent and then assess overall time spent across different types of tasks. We can then track changes over time.

Further, we could target some case populations for a sample-based approach and track time spent. For example, we could compare a sample population of cases that has a high rate of resolution before a court hearing with a sample population of cases that has high rate of proceeding to court. This would give us insight into efficiency and how tracking task time effects our work.

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION 4: Violations on city-owned properties

A cohesive process for code violations connected to City-owned properties is not in place. As a result, auditors identified a significant number of investigations on City-owned properties, including properties under the designations 'For Sale' and 'Hold for Study.' Two hundred forty-three investigations were administered on 56 violations of City-owned properties that went to court, and 4,087 investigations were administered on the 1,742 violations of City-owned properties that did not go to court. In total, 4,330 investigations were administered on City-owned properties during the scope of the audit. Therefore, resources could be unnecessarily spent on inspections, mailings, or even time in court accordingly.

- PLI's 'Dead End Cases - Programmatic Inspection Operations' policy provides guidance on City-owned parcels but does not appear to address various scenarios inspectors will encounter.
- This policy indicates that City-owned properties should be referred to DPW for clean and lien services on first investigation; however, the majority of the case files connected to City-owned properties had two or more investigations documented. Separately, DPW advised auditors that it does not typically handle clean and liens on 'For Sale' properties.
4a: PLI, DPW, and DOMI should discuss process-related solutions to managing code violations on City-owned properties, along with Finance, and implement the solution into policies and procedures.

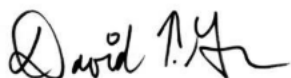
AUDITEE RESPONSE:

Working to change processes to effectively resolve maintenance issues identified by the public through 311 complaints as identified in recommendation 4a is an important customer service and policy goal. Ultimately, Pittsburgh has a responsibility to maintain its property portfolio. As noted in your audit, the Finance Department, has a significant role in the process. I also recommend that the Law Department be involved to ensure any process changes align with legal requirements. Further, the support and leadership of the Mayor and City Council could increase the likelihood of successful transformative change.

It is important to recognize that many properties identified as city-owned are owned by the three local taxing bodies – Allegheny County, City of Pittsburgh, and the Pittsburgh School District. Therefore, any policies related to city-owned properties must take this context into consideration and may require their participation. I also recommend that the City consider if adopting similar process and policy changes to property owned by other public agencies such as the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, the Urban Redevelopment Authority, and the Pittsburgh Landbank is appropriate.

Thank you for your team's diligent work, careful analysis, and thoughtful conversations during the audit process. It was a great opportunity for the PLI Code Enforcement Assistant Director, Supervisors, and me to see our work from a fresh perspective and learn from it.

Thank you,



David Green
Director and Building Code Official
Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections
412-709-4834
david.green@pittsburghpa.gov

COREY O'CONNOR
MAYOR



JOHN P. MCCLORY
DIRECTOR

CITY OF PITTSBURGH
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CITY-COUNTY BUILDING

April 29, 2026

Via Email: rachael.heisler@pittsburghpa.gov

Rachael Heisler, Controller
Office of City Controller
City of Pittsburgh
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Re: Responses to the Citywide Code Violations Performance Audit.

Ms. Heisler,

This letter is in response to the enclosed March 2026 Performance Audit of the Department of Public Works' (DPW) role in Citywide Code Violations. Upon review, DPW would like to address the Recommendations #1 through #4 as follows, by cross-referencing the report, and as discussed at the Exit Conference of this audit held on April 14, 2026:

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION 1: Policies and Procedures

Of the three City departments that handle Citywide code violations, PLI has policies and procedures implemented, DPW has policies and procedures drafted, and DOMI does not have written policies and procedures. None of the departments have policies specific to input procedures for closing out case files or timeframes for compliance and reinspection.

- DPW's inspector policies are in rough-draft form, and these drafts were communicated to their inspectors in the latter half of 2023. However, these drafts do not include (1) an expectation that inspectors select 'recorded' to close out case files and (2) the 14-day timeframe for compliance and reinspection of violations.
- DPW does not currently have policies and procedures drafted or implemented for clean and liens.

Recommendation #1

1a: All three departments should coordinate to align relevant and applicable policies and procedures and then formalize them in writing where needed. All three departments may benefit from scheduling regular meetings together in order to coordinate efforts to improve code enforcement efficiency, expectations, and standardization.

1b: Service-level timeframe expectations for inspections not mandated by City legislation or code should be reviewed on a code-by-code basis. When changes are necessary, inspection and reinspection timeframes should be adjusted and hardcoding fixes coordinated with System Operations. PLI, DPW, and DOMI should then update written policies and procedures accordingly, as applicable.

AUDITEE RESPONSE:

- DPW does coordinate often with PLI and DOMI on a case by case basis.
- Final Draft/Implemented Policy (Environmental Enforcement Inspector Standard Operating Policy) attached. Time frames would not be included in a policy or procedure as these are subject to change. Time frames are coded/built into the Department’s enforcement software Computronix (CX) as the ‘Scheduled Date’ on the Inspectors To Do list.
- Dead End Properties/The Clean and Lein process is included in Environmental Enforcement Inspector Standard Operating Policy.

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION 2: Testing of Case File Documentation

PLI, DPW, and DOMI provided case file documentation for all the samples requested by the auditors. However, a significant portion of the samples were either insufficient for understanding the conditions of the violations or missing specific items.

- Of the 15 DPW samples provided to auditors, there were four (27%) instances of unclear case notes, eight (53%) instances of missing or unclear case photos, and seven (47%) instances of unclear information indicated within compliance letters issued to the violator.

Recommendation #2

2a: All three departments should incorporate a sample-based supervisory review on case files to ensure documentation aligns with daily operating policies. This review should ensure parcel research is appropriately conducted on case files to avoid unnecessary processing steps.

2b: PLI’s parcel research should be conducted in accordance with Section 6 of its ‘Dead End Cases - Programmatic Inspection Operations’ policy, while DPW and DOMI should draft and implement policies that require parcel research and specified procedures for dead-end properties.

AUDITEE RESPONSE:

- Supervisor will conduct a random, sampled based quarterly review of investigations from each Inspector to ensure consistency and adherence to procedures. Photos, clearly written violations, and Court outcomes will be reviewed. This is included in the Environmental Enforcement Inspector Standard Operating Policy.
- Dead End properties are flagged in CX on the Warnings tab. Dead End Properties are created by PLI in accordance with their criteria and as it pertains to their internal Programmatic Inspections. The way in which Environmental Enforcement Inspectors should address Dead End properties is now included in the Environmental Enforcement Inspector Standard Operating Policy. (attached)

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION 3: Testing of Timeliness

Auditors found that timeliness was inconsistent for all departments based on the samples provided. This is likely due to the high caseload paired with limited staff. However, inspector hours are also not tracked, which limits any time-management analysis of this condition.

- Of the DPW samples provided to auditors, 12 cases required initial inspections within three days of the 311 complaint, and DPW did not meet this expectation in three (25%) of these samples.
- DPW requires that pre-court inspections occur three business days before a hearing but did not meet this standard in two (17%) of 12 applicable samples.
- Auditors identified 2,279 clean and lien referrals routed to DPW, and there were 1,198 (53%) cases still pending completion as of June 2024. There were 165 cases that were pending for two years (since 2022).

Recommendation#3

3a: PLI, DPW, and DOMI should track and log inspectors' hours required to bring code violation cases before local magistrates. This data should be used to determine whether or not additional staffing is needed and/or if the time management of case files is a relevant factor.

AUDITEE RESPONSE:

- During the timeframe of audit, DPW had 3 Inspectors for the entire City of Pittsburgh. For context, there are 12 Magisterial areas in the City of Pittsburgh. PLI staffing model is that each Magisterial area has a dedicated Inspector. DPW was understaffed and overwhelmed. It was very difficult to begin a Case File given this circumstance in the appropriate time frame. The verbiage of "required initial inspection" is not appropriate. This should be 'resolution estimate'. Presently, DPW's Service Level Agreement per the 311 Complaint system is to estimate the number of days to initial Case file and notification of first Request of Compliance to defendant. This timeframe is not written into procedure as it is subject to change. Order of handling Complaints and Case files is written into procedure adhering to the FIFO (Fist in, First out) order of operations.
- Within the CX software, Supervisor has ability to review Inspector's work by filtering overdue case files and proceeding accordingly. DPW has implemented a Minimum Weekly/Daily inspection expectation. This is mentioned in the Environmental Enforcement Inspector Standard Operating Policy, but is a separate document (attached) as the requirements are subject to change. DPW currently has no way to track Inspector hours which would include case research. Tracking an inspector's drive time, on-site time, violation entry, court time, and conversations would be burdensome to manage.
- We suspect that the 2,279 clean and lien referrals routed to DPW included City-owned properties which would have been cancelled since DPW does not lien City-owned properties. As you noted, DPW did not have dedicated clean and lien crews in 2024 and prior. Divisions did what they could on an ad-hoc basis and informed by the severity of cases. Some cases would have been cancelled because they were not remediated in time before winter set in. Last year (2025) DPW completed 447 clean and lien cases, doubling the amount of 2024 due to commitment to deploy crews two days a week and perform two clean and lien blitzes. Starting in May 2026, DPW will deploy dedicated clean and lien crews consisting of 20 current staff members from various

divisions who will start tackling approximately 780 current cases. The seasonal program will include one Supervisor and last through November right before DPW switches to winter operations.

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION 4: Violations on city-owned properties

A cohesive process for code violations connected to City-owned properties is not in place. As a result, auditors identified a significant number of investigations on City-owned properties, including properties under the designations ‘For Sale’ and ‘Hold for Study.’ Two hundred forty-three investigations were administered on 56 violations of City-owned properties that went to court, and 4,087 investigations were administered on the 1,742 violations of City-owned properties that did not go to court. In total, 4,330 investigations were administered on City-owned properties during the scope of the audit. Therefore, resources could be unnecessarily spent on inspections, mailings, or even time in court accordingly.

- DPW may, by default of PLI’s policy, receive a significant number of case referrals for City-owned properties, even though DPW does not typically handle City-owned properties. Therefore, additional time or resources could be spent routing clean-up activities to the appropriate facilitator.
- DPW does not currently have policies drafted or implemented regarding City-owned properties.

Recommendation#4

4a: PLI, DPW, and DOMI should discuss process-related solutions to managing code violations on City-owned properties, along with Finance, and implement the solution into policies and procedures.

AUDITEE RESPONSE:

- DPW has always cited occupied City owned properties (Ex. Firehouse that has refuse violations, etc.) as well as referred unoccupied/vacant City owned properties to Clean and Lein for remediation depending on the circumstance and violation. Obviously we would never take the City to Court and would ultimately withdraw the violation prior to issuing a Criminal Complaint. The Request for Compliance must still be written however as that is our process. If a citizen of Pittsburgh puts in a complaint for a City owned property, that process is the same as if a citizen put in a complaint for a privately held property. The accountability must be the same.
- The handling of City owned properties is addressed in the Environmental Enforcement Inspector Standard Operating Policy.

Thank you for the scrutiny of our daily operations and special initiatives by providing the aforementioned recommendations of improvement for the City and its esteemed residents. Please let me know if you need any other information.

Sincerely,

John P. McClory

John P. McClory (Apr 29, 2026 13:39:32 EDT)

John P. McClory
Department Director

JPM/gm
Enclosure

cc: William Crean, DPW Deputy Director
Marcelle Newman, DPW Assistant Director of Administration
Eric Contakos, DPW Inspections Supervisor
Anna Bagwell, DPW Environmental Enforcement Coordinator
Shawn Wigle, DPW Superintendent of Environmental Services
Lee Ajang, Chief Audit Officer
Pete McDevitt, Deputy Controller
Bette Ann Puharic, Assistant Performance Audit Manager
Bill Vanselow, Internal Auditor
Julie Hall, Internal Auditor

Operating Policies

Policy: Minimum Inspection Expectation Policy	Effective Date: 4/6/26
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Policy Statement:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to outline the minimum inspection expectations to ensure consistency and guidance in practices to the Department of Public Works, Environmental Enforcement Inspectors. "Inspectors" herein refers the Department of Public Works, Environmental Enforcement Inspectors.

Inspection Protocols:

i. Minimum Inspections

The Minimum number of inspections shall be 20 inspections per day (100 inspections per week).

ii. Exceptions and Extenuating Circumstances

Exceptions will be made at Supervisor's discretion for the following:
Technological issues, illness, severe weather, approved time off, required events/trainings, etc.

Operating Policies

Policy: Environmental Enforcement Inspector Standard Operating Policy	Effective Date: 4/27/26
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Policy Statement:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to outline daily job functions to ensure consistency and guidance in practices to the Department of Public Works, Environmental Enforcement Inspectors. “Inspectors” herein refers the Department of Public Works, Environmental Enforcement Inspectors.

Daily Job Functions Overview:

1. General Job Functions:

- a. **Code of Conduct.** Inspectors follow the City of Pittsburgh’s Code of Conduct Policy while on duty.
- b. **General.** Inspectors shall perform their duties per provisions adopted into Pittsburgh City Code, DPW policies, applicable job descriptions, and directives.
- c. **Service Level Agreements (SLA) to Public.** Inspectors will begin code enforcement investigations within five (5) business days from the complaint request, and upon view of any other applicable violation during the performance of normal inspection duties, unless otherwise dictated by DPW policy or direction.
- d. **Availability.** Inspectors are required to be available for appointments as assigned from 7:00 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. or 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

2. Daily Job Functions During Administration Time

a. Tasks to be completed during administration time:

- i. **Device Management.** All electronic devices (e.g. laptop, phone and associated equipment, etc.) must be charged and functioning prior to inspections.
- ii. **Review Scheduled Inspections and Court dates Review.** Inspector should review upcoming scheduled inspections and court hearings via Computronix (CX) to-do list. Any conflicts or issues should be raised to their Supervisor immediately to accommodate rescheduling requests, time off, or other changes. Inspector may link complaints and/or create relevant casefiles at this time.

- iii. **Recording non-inspections in Calendar.** Inspector shall record Court days on the Outlook calendar. Inspector may also be directed to add items to their calendar upon Supervisor request.
- iv. **Customer Response Time Requirements.** Respond to all customer inquiries (phone, text, email, etc.) within (3) three business days at the latest. Inspector's outgoing voicemail on City phone should state this.
- v. **Mandatory meetings, coaching, and/or trainings.** Inspectors must attend all scheduled staff meetings, coaching meetings, and trainings as directed by your Supervisor. Inspectors will verify that inspection does not conflict with scheduled mandatory meetings and/or trainings and will reschedule any inspections as necessary.

3. Daily Job Functions During Field Hours

a. General Field Hours and Modified Schedules:

i. **Ward Assignments.** Inspectors shall perform inspections and remain in their assigned wards during field hours (lunch, car fueling, and other times as identified on Outlook calendar excluded).

ii. Create Casefiles and Complete Required Inspections.

1. **Organize Same Complaints.** The inspector will review incoming complaints each day and create new casefiles, or link same complaints to existing casefiles open for inspection(s). Complaints should be addressed on a first in, first out basis and made into casefiles within the current determined SLA (subject to change).

2. **Requests for Compliance.** Upon discovering a relevant and citable violation, inspectors will immediately input the information into the DPW code enforcement system. Inspectors will issue a Request for Compliance for violations found three (3) times. Upon the third failed inspection, the Inspector will issue a Criminal Complaint to be sent to the magistrate or court having jurisdiction for the ward.

A. **Special Instructions.** Inspectors will provide clear and detailed information relevant to the means of abatement so that the recipient of the notice can take action to abate violation(s) present.

Inspectors will use Municipal Code to inform notice recipient of action required to abate violation(s).

B. Nuisance Properties or Properties deemed unsafe.

Properties with a history of non-compliance or a condition posing a safety concern may be issued a Criminal Complaint upon first inspection per the Inspectors discretion.

C. Exception - Dead-End Parcels. Parcels that are deemed as Dead End properties are not sent to Court. Dead End properties are identified in CX on the Warnings Tab. Inspector will select 'Send to Clean and Lein' for abatement. This is done on the initial Request for Compliance – first inspection.

D. Exception – City owned Properties. Occupied City properties may be sent Request for Compliance notices, however will not be issued a Criminal Complaint. (ex. Firehouse with refuse violations, etc.) Unoccupied City properties should be sent to Clean and Lein for remediation. (Example: Overgrown City lot, City lot with accumulation of trash. City owned vacant home with trash and debris on parcel.)

3. Pre-Court Investigation. Inspectors will complete an inspection of parcels/addresses that have a upcoming Court hearing scheduled. This inspection will occur from five business days before the hearing to the day of the Court hearing. This is automatically scheduled in CX.

4. Abatement and Withdrawal. Where upon inspection a violation has been properly abated, the case file will be marked as abated and closed with "Violation Resolved" or "Withdrawn".

A. Withdrawal of Criminal Complaint prior to Court. If a complaint is abated or withdrawn after sending a criminal complaint and prior to a scheduled court date, Inspectors are responsible for communicating with the Court.

5. Court Outcomes. To Complete this task, Inspector will select 'Recorded' to record court decision, or 'Continued' if the court case is continued by the Magistrate. Inspector must also enter into the Decision tab in CX one of the following choices: Guilty, Not Guilty, Dismissed for No Service, Dismissed-Other depending on outcome. Fine amounts are to be put in the File Notes tab, Note section.

b. Inspection Protocols:

i. General Field Requirements.

1. **Right of Entry.** Inspectors are permitted to inspect only where:
 - A. Access is granted by the property owner or tenant; or
 - B. Inspection can occur from the public right of way
 - C. Inspection from the adjacent property with access granted by the adjacent property owner or tenant.
2. **Identification.** In addition to the DPW's uniform requirements, Inspectors will have on their person, and produce whenever requested, their City Identification card and badge. Vehicle City of Pittsburgh identification magnets should be on vehicle while performing duties.

ii. Communications.

1. The inspector shall notify their Supervisor of any inquiries submitted by Mayor's office, City Council members, City Council staff, lawyers, and/or the media prior to responding.

iii. Prioritize Scheduled Inspections. Inspector shall perform all scheduled inspections as documented in CX to-do list in order of due date unless an owner or owner's agent has called for a re-inspection to abate a violation, or as directed otherwise by DPW Supervisors or Directors.

1. **Record Inspection On-Site.** Inspector shall record outcome for each inspection in CX prior to leaving inspection site. It is acceptable to record from vehicle if recorded prior to leaving inspection site. Where there are connectivity issues, the inspector should record the inspection outcome same day.
2. **Technical Issue.** If there is a technical issue beyond connectivity preventing recording an inspection, notify your Supervisor and Data Solutions Architect immediately in writing (email or text).

iv. Perform Inspections/Investigations. Inspectors will complete scheduled investigation within three (3) business days from the complaint request, and upon view of any other applicable violation during the performance of normal inspection duties.

1. **Photos Required.** Regarding photos inspector will:

- A. Take photos of the site and upload to the inspection record for the first and third inspection, as well as the Court re-inspection.
- B. Photos should clearly depict violations at property.

2. Files Notes Required. Regarding file notes inspector will:

- A. Intake any information that is relevant for the department, including neighbor, owner or tenant contact information, etc.
- B. Include in File Notes Court summaries and relevant information as directed by the MDJ (ex. “MDJ is requiring...” “Owner attended and was represented.” Reasons for continuances, etc.)
- C. Inspector will use warnings on the case file for specific issues that other inspectors may need to be aware of (ex. sovereign citizen).

3. Remote Inspections/ Investigation. An Inspector may make an administrative closure and complete a passed inspection where the closure is due to correspondence and photographic evidence, to appropriately abate a violation.

- v. **Minimum Weekly/Daily Inspection Expectation.** Inspectors should adhere to the current Minimum Inspection Expectation policy. This document outlines the expected number of inspections per week/day. This number is subject to change and accounts for court time, administrative work, and extenuating circumstances.
- vi. **Quarterly Inspections.** Supervisor will conduct quarterly, random inspections to ensure consistency and adherence to procedures outlined in this document.

c. Court Outcomes

- 1. Continuances.** Judges ultimately grant continuances. Inspector has the discretion to agree for continuances as requested by the defendant in circumstances where:
 - A. The owner or authorized agent is requesting an accommodation due to a life circumstance or disability.
- 2. Requests to Reject Continuance Requests.** Judges ultimately decide to grant or reject continuances. The inspector is empowered

to request the rejection of a request for a continuance with the assistance of the appointed City Solicitor when necessary, where:

- A. The owner or responsible agent has been unresponsive until appearing in Court.
- B. Two (2) continuances have already been granted.

3. Guilty Verdicts. In addition to other circumstances, the inspector shall pursue a verdict of Guilty for all DPW violations.

- A. Where a guilty verdict is rendered, the inspector shall immediately enter a new complaint in the code enforcement system to re-inspect the parcel/address to re-start the citation process where violations persist.

4. Casefile Outcomes.

- A. **No Violation Found** – Upon inspection, no violations are found;
- B. **Violation Found** – Violation exists;
- C. **Withdrawal** - The violation in whole is abated;
- D. **Violation Resolved** - There has been a change in ownership, requiring the violations to be re-cited;
- E. **Void/Close** - The violation(s) were issued in error in some manner.

4. Outlook Calendar Requirements:

- a. **Calendar scheduling.** Inspectors will record Court hearing dates, in-office time, appointments, and meetings on their calendars, and identify the location where applicable.
- b. **Calendar Permissions.** Outlook calendar shall be shared with Supervisors, Assistant Director of Operations, and Director with edit permissions granted to all.

COREY O'CONNOR
MAYOR



JEFF SKALICAN
DIRECTOR

CITY OF PITTSBURGH
DEPARTMENT OF MOBILITY & INFRASTRUCTURE
CITY-COUNTY BUILDING

May 19, 2026

Rachael Heisler, City Controller
Office of the City Controller
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

RE: Performance Audit of Citywide Code Violations, DOMI

Dear Controller Heisler:

Thank you for taking the time to review the code violation process. Since the time of the audit, DOMI has created a Code Enforcement Team, consisting of a Code Inspection Supervisor and two Code Enforcement Inspectors (previously Inspector 1s). DOMI continues to seek additional staffing due to the high volume of complaints received and the desire to proactively address violations rather than the current complaint driven approach.

As DOMI continues to work to improve the code violation process, DOMI appreciates the recommendations provided in the report.

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION 1: Policies and Procedures

Of the three City departments that handle Citywide code violations, PLI has policies and procedures implemented, DPW has policies and procedures drafted, and DOMI does not have written policies and procedures. None of the departments have policies specific to input procedures for closing out case files or timeframes for compliance and reinspection.

- DOMI does not have written policies and procedures drafted or implemented.
- DOMI currently operates under a 14-day compliance period for all violations, including 'Removal of Snow and Ice.' However, the department indicated that snow accumulation is typically not significant in Pittsburgh over 14-day periods. When snow and ice do accumulate for extended periods of time, a 14-day compliance period will not incentivize timely abatement of this specific violation type.

Recommendation #1

1a: All three departments should coordinate to align relevant and applicable policies and procedures and then formalize them in writing where needed. All three departments may benefit from scheduling regular meetings together in order to coordinate efforts to improve code enforcement efficiency, expectations, and standardization.

1b: Service-level timeframe expectations for inspections not mandated by City legislation or code should be reviewed on a code-by-code basis. When changes are necessary, inspection and reinspection timeframes should be adjusted and hardcoding fixes coordinated with System Operations. PLI, DPW, and DOMI should then update written policies and procedures accordingly, as applicable.

AUDITEE RESPONSE:

DOMI developed written standard operating procedures in 2025 when the Code Enforcement Inspection Supervisor position was hired. DOMI is actively working on a new process for snow and ice removal and plans to roll it out next winter.

For all violations that are routed to DOMI through 3-1-1, SLAs were developed with the move to the new 3-1-1 system in 2025, but they are not yet reflected in the code enforcement module in Computronix (the software used by the inspection team to process violations). The build out of SLAs in Computronix is expected in 2026.

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION 2: Testing of Case File Documentation

PLI, DPW, and DOMI provided case file documentation for all the samples requested by the auditors. However, a significant portion of the samples were either insufficient for understanding the conditions of the violations or missing specific items.

- Of the 15 DOMI samples provided to auditors, there were six (40%) instances of unclear case notes, six (40%) instances of missing or unclear case photos, and four (27%) instances of unclear information indicated within compliance letters issued to the violator.

Recommendation #2

2a: All three departments should incorporate a sample-based supervisory review on case files to ensure documentation aligns with daily operating policies. This review should ensure parcel research is appropriately conducted on case files to avoid unnecessary processing steps.

2b: PLI's parcel research should be conducted in accordance with Section 6 of its 'Dead End Cases - Programmatic Inspection Operations' policy, while DPW and DOMI should draft and implement policies that require parcel research and specified procedures for dead-end properties.

AUDITEE RESPONSE:

The addition of a Code Enforcement Inspection Supervisor in 2025 and the development of standard operating procedures has improved clarity in compliance letters and case records. DOMI will continue to improve through regular supervisor review.

While DOMI has very few dead-end cases, DOMI will work with legal to draft and implement policy.

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION 3: Testing of Timeliness

Auditors found that timeliness was inconsistent for all departments based on the samples provided. This is likely due to the high caseload paired with limited staff. However, inspector hours are also not tracked, which limits any time-management analysis of this condition.

- Of the samples provided to auditors, eight cases required initial inspections within seven days of the 311 complaint, and DOMI did not meet this expectation in only one (13%) sample.

- DOMI requires that pre-court inspections occur three business days before a hearing but did not meet this standard in 10 (83%) of 12 applicable samples.
- Reinspection is required by DOMI within 14 days and 10 (71%) of 14 applicable samples did not meet this expectation.

Recommendation#3

3a: PLI, DPW, and DOMI should track and log inspectors' hours required to bring code violation cases before local magistrates. This data should be used to determine whether or not additional staffing is needed and/or if the time management of case files is a relevant factor.

AUDITEE RESPONSE:

During the timeframe included in the audit, DOMI Inspectors did complete pre-court inspections within three business days before a hearing, but did these inspections were not logged in Computronix. These inspections are now required to be logged and would be reflected in the case records moving forward.

When a violation is found, the party in violation receives a notice and has 14 days to resolve the violation. DOMI Inspectors are instructed to complete reinspection after 14 days and not before.

Since at least 2020, DOMI has maintained an inspector log to track average inspections per day. Moving forward, DOMI will add to the tracker the amount of time an inspector spends in magistrate court.

FINDING/RECOMMENDATION 4: Violations on city-owned properties

A cohesive process for code violations connected to City-owned properties is not in place. As a result, auditors identified a significant number of investigations on City-owned properties, including properties under the designations 'For Sale' and 'Hold for Study.' Two hundred forty-three investigations were administered on 56 violations of City-owned properties that went to court, and 4,087 investigations were administered on the 1,742 violations of City-owned properties that did not go to court. In total, 4,330 investigations were administered on City-owned properties during the scope of the audit. Therefore, resources could be unnecessarily spent on inspections, mailings, or even time in court accordingly.

- DOMI does not currently have policies drafted or implemented regarding City-owned properties.

Recommendation#4

4a: PLI, DPW, and DOMI should discuss process-related solutions to managing code violations on City-owned properties, along with Finance, and implement the solution into policies and procedures.

AUDITEE RESPONSE:

As DOMI's work is focused in the right of way, only a small number of citations for city-owned properties are initiated by DOMI. Overgrowth and lack of snow and ice removal are the biggest areas where we see DOMI violations on City-owned properties. Moving forward, DOMI will coordinate with PLI and DPW to develop solutions.

As I hope you've seen in the above responses, DOMI has made progress in standardizing the code violation process; however, with only two code enforcement inspectors, capacity continues to be our main limitation. While DOMI will continue to advocate for additional staff, DOMI also believes efficiencies could be found in the existing processes.

DOMI would be interested in a holistic review of the inspection responsibilities across departments to determine if work is appropriately allocated and if overlap could be reduced. Additionally, DOMI would like to see recommendations on how the respective agencies should solve code issues that may span multiple departments.

Lastly, as shown in this report, enforcing code violations through magistrate court is not particularly efficient nor does it always resolve the violation. For permitted work, DOMI has successfully gone after street bonds for improper restoration. While this is a lengthy process, it has helped us restore our streets. For all violations, there is a provision in code which would allow the city to complete work and seek reimbursement by the responsible party; however, we have never done this and would need assistance to build this pipeline. DOMI believes, with assistance, this could improve the effectiveness of enforcement and the quality and safety of our city streets and sidewalks.

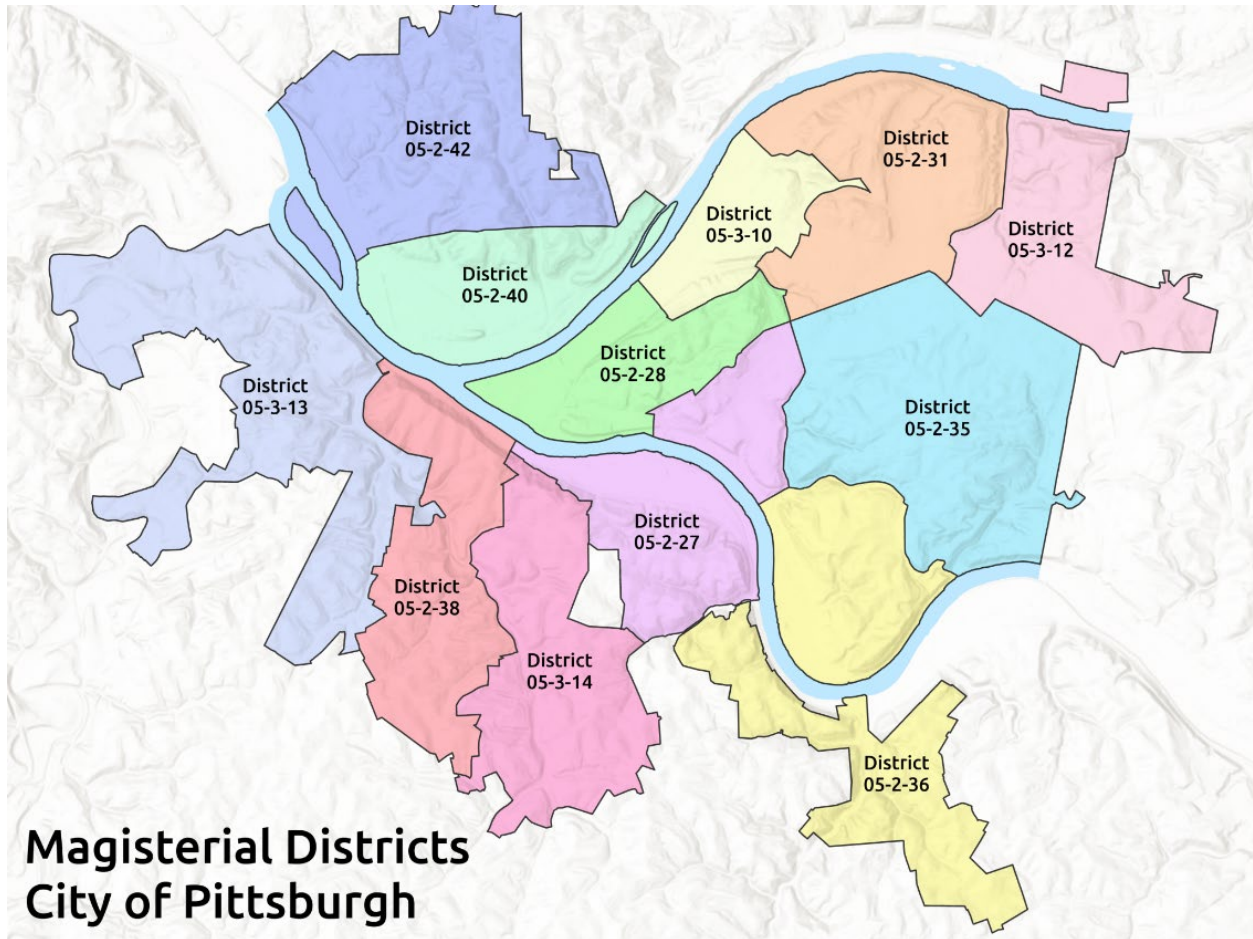
DOMI looks forward to continued work with the Office of the City Controller and other partners to continue to improve.

Sincerely,


Jeff Skalican (May 20, 2026 11:26:25 EDT)

Jeff Skalican
Director

EXHIBIT B
Map of Magisterial District Courts



Source: GIS Team, Dept. of Innovation & Performance, City of Pittsburgh

Note: Table 9 in the audit report lists 05-0-03, which is a Pittsburgh Municipal Court and not reflected on the map above.